

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

5

VOL. 2

WINTER 1950

The Great Utopia

The Society for Social Responsibility
in Science

Industrial Monopoly Capitalism

Nathan Davidson

The Degradation of Man

Donald R. Pearce

The Russian and Yugoslav Revolutions

Alec Brown

Critical Revue

William Cobbett, Heinrich Heine,
Erik Erikson

Germany—An Ersatz Democracy

Ken Eaton

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

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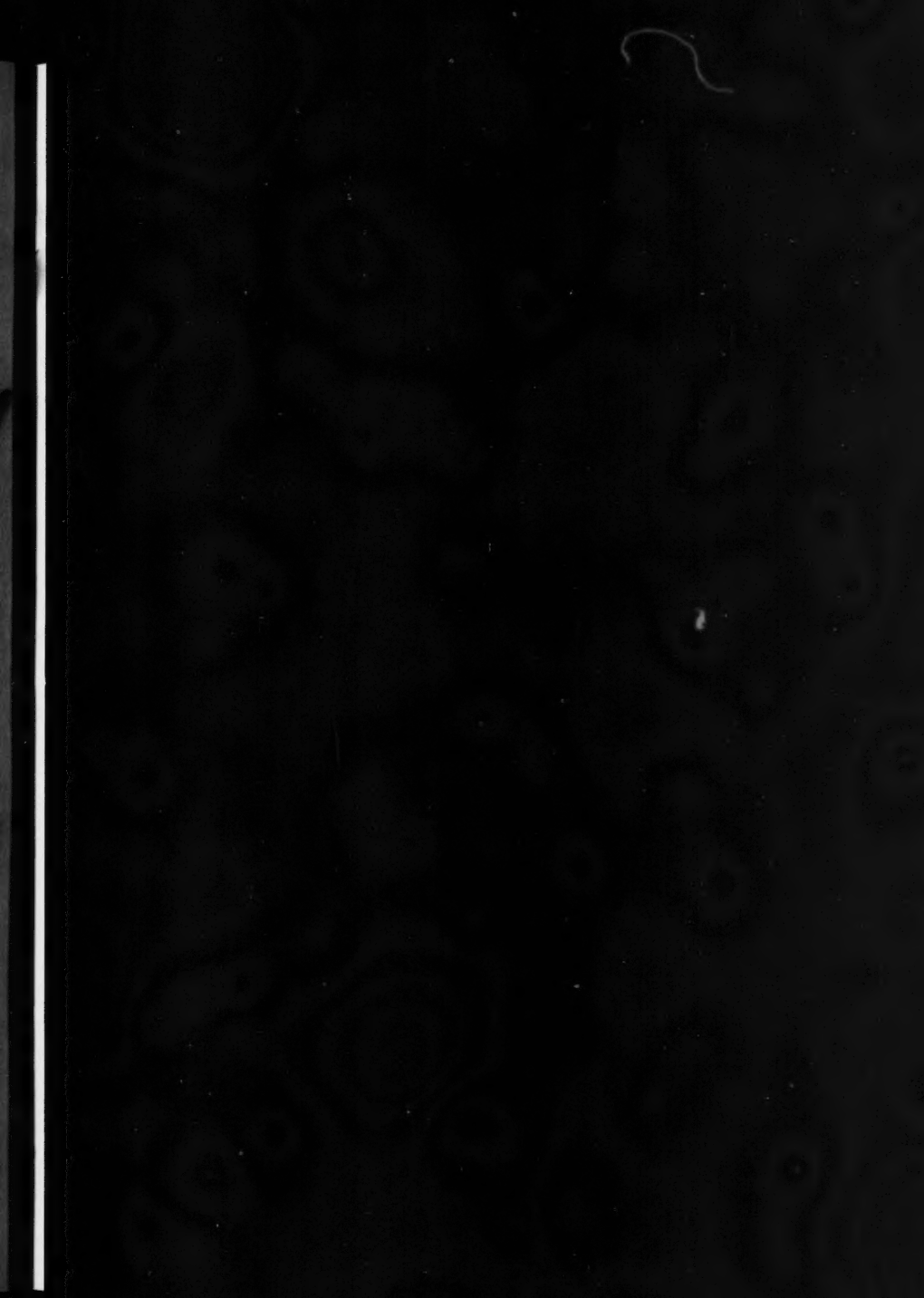
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PRESS COMMENT AND READERS' OPINIONS

'... Frankly I find very little to criticize in your *Contemporary Issues*. It is a splendidly forthright and honest opinion-maker which has a great future in both Britain and Germany. If you wish to quote me I will say that "*Contemporary Issues* within the first few months of its appearance has established its reputation as a fearless and untiring champion of right — however unsavoury right may be in the wrong quarters! It is only when we have more magazines like *Contemporary Issues* that we can expect an enlightened and discriminating reading public capable of rejecting cant and dogma on sight. Congratulations, *Contemporary Issues* and forward!" ...'

W. B. HOPKINS, Asst. Editor, *Across Frontiers*.

Readers are invited to send in comment and criticisms, articles, reports, newspaper extracts, etc., and should indicate whether they wish articles or letters to appear over initials, pseudonyms or full name.



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EDITORIAL

IN publishing 'The Great Utopia', our leading article in this issue, we take the first important step towards developing a plan for a world movement for a democracy of content. The article is presented as an outline and not intended as a finished blue-print; it is a guide for further discussion and action. This is in conformity with our idea of the democratic movement as arising and being conducted under public control. Further 'planning' should occur through interaction with the public. The next step, necessarily implied by the outline, is that it be developed in greater detail — more especially by means of an economic plan which will provide it with proper content and direction to be extended into every field of public life. The co-operation of our readers is indispensable for this task. Only through thorough-going discussion, through the unrestrictedly free but informed and objective exchange of opinions of individuals of the most diverse origins, convictions and experiences, can a comprehensive solution of the crucial issues of our time be arrived at. It is possible for every individual to participate in this process to the extent of his capacities and interests. Those who do not contribute articles are asked to enquire regarding obscure points, to raise objections and doubts, to send in reports, newspaper extracts and documents. The creation along these lines of a circle of co-operating readers is the pre-condition for influencing and transforming political practice.

A good example is provided by the reaction to the leaflet we published recently on the Bundestag elections in Germany and which we analysed in our last number. In the next number we publish a questionnaire sent to Germany in order to 'follow up' this continuous response and to ascertain the extent to which the Bonn 'Parliament' has lived up to its promises. Like the comments on the original leaflet, the replies to the questionnaire are a concrete illustration of how a movement for democracy of content is initiated by simply beginning to practise it. All that is required is that at all times we protect the freedoms of everybody, including our opponents and even the freedom to express undemocratic views.

THE GREAT UTOPIA

Outlines for a plan of organization and activity of a democratic movement

(Submitted in agreement with the editors and friends of
Dinge der Zeit and *Contemporary Issues*)

I

FOR thousands of years tormented humanity has been labouring at the solution of the disconsolate and trivial tasks of how to eat, dwell and live in security; for thousands of years, it has yearned for a paradise from which it feels itself expelled and to which it wishes to return. The theme which myths and fairy tales sing of, the force which impels masses into movement, the desideratum of founders of religions, what philosophers have brooded over, the object of the enquiries of scientists, the visionings of poets, the achievements or aspirations of statesmen and revolutionaries . . . all revolve round these two poles and are nourished, at root, only by the terrible necessity for securing the perpetuation of life in good or evil. But all endeavour had to remain fantasy and Utopia, the problem of humanity could, in the final analysis, find merely a temporary regulation 'in evil' as long as it was not possible to produce sufficient goods for the satisfaction of even the most urgent needs of everybody. This decisive difficulty was only removed by the so-called *Industrial Revolution*, which, towards the middle of the last century, also encompassed Germany and America and constituted the basis for the 'Communist Manifesto', which appeared in 1848, that is, for scientific socialism in general.

2

To have elaborated the simple fact that the dream of humanity was not realizable without definite material pre-requisites (while at the same time proving that these pre-requisites were maturing) remains an historical act of sweeping significance — the great merit of the much-maligned Marx and Engels. And as long as the material pre-requisites for a higher social organization have not been destroyed, there is nothing *in principle* to obstruct the solution of the social question with which all controversies are concerned.

In history, it is exclusively a matter of what has actually happened, not of what might have occurred under different circumstances and conditions. It is purely and simply a matter of historical fact that all progress has been achieved at the expense of the great majority, that is, it has been accompanied by the rise and increase of the social question. The social question is, in truth, but the form in which the struggle to assure the continuance of human life is fought. Real Marxism (the original in contradistinction to that caricature which demagogic falsifiers incessantly suck out of their thumbs

and abysmal ignorance assiduously diffuses) has always emphasized therefore, in every advance of civilization, the social and human retrogression, implicit in the birth of the social question.

3

Pursuing the contrast between civilizatory progress and social retrogression to its ultimate consequences, Marxism posed the alternative — either 'Socialism or Barbarism'. If we fail to transform the capitalist mode of production into a socialist mode, barbarism is no longer an abstract threat but assumes the sharply delineated outlines for the doom of all modern society. World wars, like the last two and the anticipated third, are, according to Marxism, integral constituents of the capitalist system and as unavoidable as the increasingly closer interlacement of State power with control over the means of production, accompanied by the revival of outright slavery and the enormous growth of parasitic strata. War and civil war become the mode of existence of bourgeois society; interventions by foreign powers are on the order of the day; nations and national minorities are annihilated, expelled, dismembered and put under control; a continually increasing percentage of the social product is devoted to the production of means of destruction and to services and institutions connected with destruction, while official begging for every sort of 'palliative' and diversionary purpose increases. Of particular importance is the one-sided civil war conducted against the population in the Russian sphere of power which will extend over the whole world if the present foundations are maintained, irrespective of whether fascism or western 'democracy' emerges as victor from the struggle for world domination.

4

Russia has not the slightest connection with Socialism or 'Communism' whether in the national or international, ideological or material sense.¹

¹ Both Stalin and his gang, and many bourgeois demagogues (this includes the Social Democrats) cling firmly, of course, to the myth of Russian 'Communism' for the purpose of public stultification. But, wherever there is need for being slightly more informed on the actual situation, as, for example, in American governmental circles, anyone may read in an official publication (79 Congress, 2nd Session-period, Documents of the House, No. 754), the following — under the misleading title, 'Communism in Action':

'Between 1924 and 1928 the international revolutionary intellectuals who had sponsored militant communism gave way to the Communist Party bureaucracy and the military and civilian technicians whose ideology and planned construction dominates Soviet Russia to-day. Many dissidents still had to be liquidated in the purges [the correct word would be "mass-murders" — Eds.] of the 1930's; but these "deviationists" of both the Left and the Right had been losing influence since the death of Lenin in January, 1924. It is basic to an understanding of the present phase of Soviet development to distinguish the abstract communistic theories of its earlier revolutionary phase from the system of industrial control which actually evolved in the U.S.S.R. The Communist or Leninist Revolution, by seizing power, made the present system of operation of industry in the U.S.S.R. possible; but the present Soviet industrial system is by no means the same as that initiated in the Revolution. Old communistic theories, phrases, slogans, and poses were generally not officially repudiated; but those who were unable to accept the changing reality [the counter-revolution! — Eds.] were displaced by followers who saw the need for the changes in organization and

(Continued at foot of next page)

The nationalization of the means of production which (for example, also in England) is misrepresented as 'Socialism' does not in the least alter the character of the economy as a private profit economy (it remains irrelevant whether it is managed in the interests of the old owners or of a new bureaucracy). It does not overcome a single one of the devastating consequences of the capitalist system but rather drives these vehemently towards that point where unrestrained Russian barbarism makes manifest the final outcome of capitalist development. For this reason serious Marxists have denounced mere nationalization as the crippled offspring of 'free' competition and as a lever of economic and political reaction. In addition, as against Stalinists, reformists and supporters of 'private initiative', they have insisted unyieldingly and without illusion that each 'last' war would achieve neither freedom nor economic advance but would only prepare the field for the fight for world supremacy. The more assiduously the ideologists have contested this in the past and nurtured extravagant hopes, the more they are cultivating to-day the melancholy 'recognition' that 'two great powers have remained' who, with their respective satellites, will soon clash with each other. But to acknowledge Marxism, for which the new conflict was only one among many obvious matters, as the superior method of viewing the world—that, of course, occurs to scarcely anyone.

5

The development of capitalist society was, in general, fully anticipated by Marxism in all important respects and — with a painful certainty — especially in its negative or destructive aspect. But the moment that this negative side predominates, and thereby brings about the alternative effect (and this would happen when the proletariat for whatever reason was unable to achieve or maintain the social revolution), it signalizes that Marxism is broken up in so far as it represents a political system and bases itself upon the working class as the fulcrum for development and as the force for the accomplishment of the positive solution.

There is no longer any possibility of doubt in this direction: the classical workers' movement has perished through the betrayals of the Second and Third International, and will never arise again. As a politically organized class — symbolized by a party, capable of action, which intervenes in the struggles of the masses and leads them purposefully with its *own* tasks and

control which were being made. The official spokesmen of the new party line did not drop many of the slogans of militant communism; instead they re-interpreted them and used them to describe a whole new set of controls which were succeeding as academic communism or the communism of the books had never succeeded. That is the system perhaps better described as Stalinism than as communism, Marxian socialism, or Leninism, which prevails in the U.S.S.R. to-day and is described and compared with the American system in these pages.' (page 6). On page 26, the document repeats: 'The communism of the 5-Year-Plans is not the natural communism of the treatises or the communism envisaged by the early Russian revolutionaries. To be specific about the type of communism flourishing in the U.S.S.R. to-day, we have defined it as Stalinism. . . .'

As said before: Where there is a need for real knowledge the correct name for the Russian system is found in the word 'Stalinism' but, in spite of this, the demagogic instructions (a 'type of communism') are not abandoned. On the contrary, the people are regaled only with the demagoguery which in its myriad versions, equates Stalinism with Communism, Socialism or Marxism-Leninism.

aims — the modern proletariat has already suffered the threatened 'penalty of destruction' or (as in America) has never achieved political organization. The conception that the organized workers would overcome the capitalist system and would, in emancipating themselves, emancipate the whole of society, is at least historically obsolete. The political dissolution of the workers' movement is accompanied by the destruction of its economic foundations, that is, by the extension of slave labour with little or no mechanical equipment and which first became a mass phenomenon in Russia.² Henceforth the solution of the task falls directly on the overwhelming majority of mankind whose interests increasingly coalesce and can be reduced to a common denominator socially as well as nationally and internationally. The development is, via a detour, again approaching the old Marxist ideal of a simultaneous turnabout in all or at least many countries.

6

Having arrived at the utmost entanglement, the character of the social question is transformed into its opposite: The problem becomes quite simple again and requires for its solution in principle no other method than that by which Alexander unravelled the Gordian knot. With it, the century-old controversy over Marxism has also become historically redundant. For a long time already it has ceased to be a question of determining the future course of historical development but has been one of utilizing sensibly an achieved result. Since the material bases for the overcoming of the crisis of humanity demonstrably exist, the task is reduced to a mere measure of administration which can be accomplished with existing forces and means and can be enforced by democratic majority decision. The position with regard to theoretical dispute is essentially the same as that of a practitioner who is engaged in saving mother and child by a Caesarian operation and no longer discusses whether historical materialism or Christianity is the correct doctrine. A new consciousness of the practicability of the old 'Utopias of reason' is necessary and, at the height of confusion, will drive its way through. Antiquity took centuries to die — bourgeois society came to birth only after long struggles and with the help of bloody revolutions. The attempt to perpetuate bourgeois conditions is thus a delusion. The alternative still is either Socialism (an economy for the satisfaction of human needs) or Barbarism. The task therefore is to stimulate consciousness into making an inventory of resources and into showing how and by what means the proposed aim is to be achieved.

7

One must not expect miracles, of course. Less than ever is this a time for illusions. The curse of blindness burdens bourgeois society and makes the perspective of self-annihilation appear 'more realistic' than the attempt at a

² We may leave undecided here the question as to whether a class that, prior to its seizure of power, had neither developed its own mode of production nor exercised any other leading functions, is at all capable of assuming leadership. In any case, the political training which, according to Marx, the workers receive through the processes of capitalist production, is far from sufficient to provide them with even a glimmering of the general connections. The theoretical-political training in the party must be added — a task the fulfilment of which has been prevented after sublimely hopeful beginnings by the victory of revisionism and Stalinism.

rational change of existing conditions. The destruction of productive capacity, of material and human beings, repeated on an ever increasing scale, is crowned by the possibility of an atomic and bacteriological war — cold-bloodedly considered and recommended as the best solution for the contemporary dilemma. But in wars lies not the only danger threatening the existence of humanity. The higher the productive forces are developed and, under the domination of capital, increasingly put to the service of aims of destruction, the more rapidly are the natural sources of wealth exhausted. As long as the profit motive determines economy, the celebrated control of nature on the basis of science remains problematical in the highest degree and produces innumerable 'unforeseen' effects. Reckless exhaustion of agricultural soil; despoliation of forests, altering watersheds, the courses of rivers, the water table and both the quantity and effect of precipitations; extermination of fauna on the one hand and overgrazing of pasture land by domestic herds on the other — all this denudes the land of its natural protection against being washed and blown away by floods and winds (so-called erosion or 'land cancer'), the extent of which has of late evoked loud Cassandra cries on the part of 'experts'.

A further malignant effect of bad agricultural methods used for profit extraction is the predominant or exclusive use of artificial fertilizer which reduces the nutritional value of the foodstuffs produced (including fodder and the slaughter stock fed on it which is in addition often bred at an artificially rapid tempo). To this must be added the contamination, dangerous to life, of rivers and coasts through the excessive discharge of industrial refuse (including many chemicals), urban dirt and human excrement urgently needed on the land. It must be regarded as certain that all these factors, but especially the one-sided use of chemical fertilizers, are responsible for the appalling increase of heart maladies (disturbances of the circulation), of cancer and other modern plagues which must be considered in the strictest sense of the word as *production diseases*.⁴ Chemistry cannot replace Nature and the natural processes. In this way, does violation of the law already

³ The subject of erosion was treated extensively in *Contemporary Issues*, No. 3, by Stephen D. Banner ('Humanity's Resources and the New Malthusianism'). Additional material will be published at the earliest opportunity.

⁴ One does not have to be a physician nor an 'expert' in any of the relevant fields in order to arrive at the following opinion: The secret of cancer is to be found in chemistry but the cause of the shocking increase of this disease lies in modern food production. It is certainly no accident that the United States and of these especially the north, exhibit record figures for artificial cultivation (land and stock) as well as for heart diseases, cancer, infantile paralysis, mental disorders, etc. Occasionally the layman's view is confirmed in books or articles. For example, the Canadian doctors, Evan Shute, Wilfrid Shute and Arthur Vogelsang, recently declared that heart diseases are virtually unknown among primitive peoples except when they — begin to eat the food of civilized people. They emphasize further that until 1910 (before the national diet had become 'refined'), heart diseases occupied fourth instead of, as to-day, first place among causes of death in America and, that the mortality rate for heart diseases has risen 250% in this period. The Viennese doctor, Bernard Aschner (resident in New York from 1938) adduces good reasons in his book, *The Art of the Healer*, for the conclusion that cancer is of chemical origin. He, too, reports, partly basing himself on Eric Stone's book, *Medicine Among The American Indians*, that cancer was unknown among the Indians who lived solely on buffalo meat. — These are, of course, merely a few indications which could be considerably increased.

expressed by Justus von Liebig as a warning — Man must return to Nature what he takes from her — avenge itself.

8

Capitalist development proceeds with extreme unevenness. It unceasingly revolutionizes all relationships and produces colossal disproportions between town and country, between the various branches of production and the different countries and continents. As a result of this uneven development, the United States of America, which contributes only 7% of all working people in the world, to-day participates to the extent of about 50% in world industrial and over 20% in world agricultural production.⁵ On the basis of commodity production a disproportion of such magnitude has immeasurable weight and impresses its stamp on the rest of the development.

It is a great irony of history that Europe which once colonized the world is now herself being depressed to colonial status by a former colony and, by means of 'peaceful' trade conferences, Marshall Plans, etc., is being put on rations which are to confirm and consolidate the supremacy of the United States. In this process America's aspirations are not the result of any fantastic 'evil will' but of the innermost driving forces of the capitalist mode of production which draw Good and Evil into their orbit and subject every impulse to their blind fury. We must learn to face the cruel facts and to understand that German fascism, too, only exposed the deepest essence of capitalism and its ultimate consequences, when it transformed the ever extending 'I or You' of free competition into the monopolist slogan of 'We or You'. This slogan corresponded to capitalist reality after the end of the first world war. It formulated the compulsory situation created by the development which has come to light in its full dimensions as a *capitalist-historical* inevitability through the political events of recent years.⁶ With ineluctable lawfulness it was neither Russia nor England but the United States which became both the author and the guarantor of 'unconditional surrender', the Morgenthau Plan, the Potsdam Agreement, etc. The real historical adversary of Germany and England was this very American imperialism which recognized the 'Command of the hour' and, in the person of Roosevelt, understood how to manoeuvre the people into the war against their will.⁷ By him also the question of 'We or You' was quite clearly foreseen and included, apart from Germany and England, also Japan, while Russia by force of circumstances could become junior partner to a far greater degree than any other 'ally'.

⁵ Yet of some 61 million working people in the U.S.A. only little more than half work in production proper (industry, mining, trades, agriculture and forestry), while 28 million are distributed over commerce and transport, public services, domestic service, professions, etc., down to boxers, football players, and so on. This, too, is a disproportion which reinforces the catastrophic effects.

⁶ Incidentally, the circumstance that, from a *capitalist* point of view, no 'solution' of the conflict remained other than 'We or You', provides the only conceivable 'psychological' explanation for the allegedly 'incomprehensible' determination of German fascism to draw everything within reach into the abyss with it in the event of a defeat. And the same circumstance explains the adoption of the fascist policy by America, i.e., concretely speaking: the obduracy with which America pursues the foreign political aims of German fascism from its own basis.

⁷ See 'The Last Isolationist' in Vol. 1, No. 2, *Contemporary Issues*.

9

With America's victory a power has overwhelmed the world, the mass production of mediocre and inferior quality, which far surpasses all the other powers in importance and which has both negative and positive effects.

By maintaining commodity economy, the negative side advances into the foreground. For not only is it the basis of the existing world situation but also of the further deterioration of the general situation in the economic, social, political, intellectual and moral relations.

The same power, however, can become the point of departure for a contrary development. Both theoretically and practically, the possibility exists in principle for still further extension of mass production and for the alleviation of mankind's most urgent needs within the shortest space of time. On the existing basis, with the elimination of waste and superfluous industries (besides those of armaments, especially such as cause the extinction of certain plant and animal species or the exhaustion of raw materials which could be better utilized) it would at the same time be possible for quality production to rise uninterruptedly, to establish a rational relationship between mass production (which will always be necessary for certain types of human needs) and quality production, and to make the boundaries between the two 'fluid' through the improvement of mass production. In this alone exists the basis for the 'simplification' of the social question, the practical solution of which is now the most important issue. In principle or within range of the human will nothing else is necessary than the decision to give 'free play' to the production of really useful goods in every country on earth and to distribute these (to the extent that they are exchangeable) in accordance with the amount of labour time rendered.

Inexhaustible as human labour power ('the producer of all values') are also the possibilities of social and individual development once the fetters of commodity production fall away, out of necessity, and man is able to assert himself freely and to identify himself with the products of his activity (which will no longer be capitalist labour).

10

In view of the dominating influence of American mass production, the fate of humanity in the coming years depends primarily upon the further development in America. The purely practical nature of the task to be accomplished immediately raises the question of political organization, i.e. the political differentiation which has, throughout the world with the exception of some colonial countries, passed through a retrograde movement towards the complete disappearance of basic differences and which in America has not gone beyond a rudimentary beginning. Among the important countries, America owes its exceptional political position^{*} to the circumstance that it had enormous spaces to conquer, that it could develop continuously in breadth and was never strongly compelled to explore itself in depth to any great extent and so sharply to work out its political contradictions. Whereas in the

^{*} Including *inter alia* the 'virginity' of its 'labour movement' or simply its political non-existence in the sense of its non-appearance — in contrast to that non-existence in Europe which is the result of a development closed within itself (rise, flowering and total disintegration).

realm of Stalinism, it is the general poverty which has permitted it to kill any political differentiation (and, in fact, to continue to kill it for at least as long as external impulses fail to influence the development of Russia in an opposite direction) in America, by contrast, it is the general wealth and the perspective of world domination which binds the total consciousness and has so far frustrated any considerable differentiation.

11

The so-called masses or broad layers of the people alter their behaviour in relation to existing conditions only when incisive material changes occur and the utmost pressure demands their adaptation to the new situation.

The movement of the masses is elementary and centres exclusively round the next possible step. Because of their social situation, the theories and ideologies of the political parties play a part for them only in so far as these refer to the next step possible; the rest can be replaced indifferently by any words or can be completely discarded without arousing the slightest shift in their behaviour.⁹ When circumstances permit they press forward with infallible instinct for their immediate needs and, in this, invariably outstrip even their most capable and most willing leaders whereas, where there is no way out, they retreat and seek to mitigate the effect of the altered conditions by means of passive or active adaptation¹⁰. Of course, it is to be noted that there are neither 'homogeneous' masses nor classes. Each stratum pursues its current special needs and there can be produced, on the average, more than an average effect, only then if extraordinary circumstances put on the order of the day a decision for a whole nation, the great majority of a nation or even (ideal case) several nations and all interests are concentrated upon one point.¹¹

A democratic movement must know all this and base itself firmly upon it. It must learn without cease from the mass strivings if it does not wish to be

⁹ How little it is possible for masses to be influenced by theories and programmes which do not touch their immediate interests is demonstrated by the experience of the Russian Revolution. The peasants made the fine distinction: We are for the Bolsheviks but against the 'Communists'.

¹⁰ Good examples of both ways of behaviour are: (1) the resistance which the German workers attempted against the threat to their existence in the most recent dismantlings (the consciousness that these dismantlings are senseless crimes and merely to be attributed to the 'fear of German competition' is the popular consciousness, dominating all tendencies and which cannot, therefore, be extinguished by machine guns); (2) German fascism, from which the masses, hostile to it, could best escape by adaptation in view of the paralysis of their own organizations brought about by the leadership (the consciousness that the leadership of all oppositional parties and trade unions would not permit the slightest real fighting action) was also popular consciousness and, not least, gave to the fascists the 'encouragement' they needed.

¹¹ We are approaching such a constellation because, under the American-Russian pressure, sooner or later, the whole of Europe, Asia and Africa will be driven to attempt breaking the intolerable shackles. At the same time, the identical pressure rebounds on America where it sharpens the latent ever-existing antagonisms and everywhere communicates a presentiment that the system as such has exhausted itself, and that it is, therefore, responsible for the misery of the world. What was said at the end of Section 5 is thus concretized: 'Henceforth, the solution of the task falls on the overwhelming majority of mankind, whose interests increasingly coalesce,' etc.

diverted into sterile idealization, ideologizing and moralizing.¹² To attain full clarity about its practical activity it must know equally that there would be little hope of a change in the behaviour of the American masses if the perspective of American world domination were more than ephemeral and if, with the aggravation of world difficulties, the beginning of the decline in the dominating country was not also indicated.¹³

¹² It is the elementary forces which stir the sea to tumult, disturb it slightly on the surface or 'keep it calm' but not the single drops of water and waves, led by 'moral considerations', which evoke these 'modes of behaviour'. Nothing is gained by classifying the elementary forces as 'good' or 'evil' or by describing the reaction of the water to the storm as 'moral irritation'. The water itself is an elementary force and what the elements, down to the tiniest particle, seek, is to level out or find harmonious balance. Only in the individual possessing knowledge and on the social plane does the striving to level out become Morality — in sharp contradistinction to the elementarily reacting mass which, by definition, does not possess a 'means of reflection' and *cannot* know anything about itself. To the extent, therefore, that Morality is nothing but a *conscious* endeavour to level out and the impulsion to level out is a universal attribute of matter (motion) — to that extent, 'Ethics' are a phenomenon of *natural science* and therefore quite capable of scientific explanation. Every Morality which is not directed towards the *real* equilibrium of the *whole* of society and which answers purely practical problems with moral (psychological) commonplaces is, therefore, inadequate. It can, temporarily, claim greater general validity and be more progressive than another, as long as it is in opposition to some obsolete particular interest (e.g., bourgeois moral conceptions against those of Feudalism). Thereafter it falls back more and more as a new sectional interest into the strictly elementary: it becomes ruling morality, morality of the ruling class which is, as a class, like the mass and can know as little about itself as the mass, however strongly it may dominate the other classes through its specific gravity and however much it may raise itself above them. The whole problem of democracy of content, therefore, presents itself as one of overcoming the elementary character of society: it is to be lifted out of a state in which it is yoked by blind elementary forces (the elementary striving for equilibrium is blindly demoniacal and always drives to one point where it finds violent discharge, as in storms and earthquakes, wars and revolutions, only to accumulate immediately new tension, etc.). The mass and class relationship is itself to be abolished — through a removal of poverty which is only perpetuated by artificial means, together with the dissolution of the division of labour in its class-forming effects and the dissolution of the antagonism between town and country (these are the three essential pre-requisites of the mass-class relationship). A morality aiming at these ends is already in its conception no longer particularistic, but palpably general; it does not 'rule' but liberates; it does not destroy the individual but only gives him reality; it is not a prescribed compulsion but voluntary creative achievement of every individual. With this morality the democratic movement immediately makes its practical start as will be more closely demonstrated in the discussion of the organizational question.

¹³ In the last issue ('Interim Balance Sheet') the 'first signs of a more serious disequilibrium in America as well', was mentioned. Meanwhile, it is estimated that there will be 5 million unemployed by July and even 10 million by January, 1950. From various sides, it has been pointed out that the official figures are unreliable and that the situation is incorrectly described. Helplessness, embarrassed mumbling and silly recipes on all sides. Of particular interest among the Marshall Plan countries is Britain, where the air is noticeably becoming more attenuated. The grand 'socialist' experiments prove to be a bluff, the aim of which is to strengthen the state apparatus. Accompanying this are two sharp American protests (within a few months) against 'unfair' trade practices by Britain — in spite of the proverb, there is no honour among thieves. Never before in history have there been greater potentialities for the welfare of society and — greater incapacity on the part of the governments.

12

In capitalist society all institutions have the tendency to render themselves autonomous, i.e. to alienate themselves from their original aim and to become an end in themselves in the hands of those administering them. This is as true of the innumerable State and semi-State institutions as of all parties and organizations, under no circumstances excluding those which Labour has itself created for reasons political (parties), economic (trade unions), cultural (free-thinking, educational, sports associations, etc.), or for reasons of mutual assistance (welfare organizations, insurance, etc.). No matter what the erstwhile intentions may have been, with each new institution, society in its totality has, in the long run, imposed on itself a new burden which is more or less willingly and unwillingly borne, which has only the slightest connection with the original aim, and which in the majority of all cases consists of pure parasitism.¹⁴

This tendency to become an end in itself, not only dominates the bureaucracies living on the various institutions and organizations but also the individual professional groups.¹⁵ It grows out of the division of labour (restriction to a definite field of activity which one cannot leave, as a rule, without losing one's livelihood) and the general competition which compels man to sell his capacities (reduced by the external relations), his product and even his convictions, his dignity, his honour and his sexuality on an ever fluctuating market, which, only after successful haggings, enables him to acquire a greater or a lesser share of values, whether created by himself or by others, by means of money (robbery, theft, cheating, collections, begging and the like are 'forms of appropriation' resulting from the intermediation through money).

Innumerable victims fall annually to this purely animal competitive struggle — millions and millions must periodically be ruined absolutely unnecessarily because, under a barbaric system, they must waste energy, happiness and health on the production of things which, whether useful, valueless or harmful, suddenly become 'unsaleable',¹⁶ over which they have

¹⁴ *Politics*, New York, No. 3, 1948, page 263, published an article concerning the 'Socialist Labour Party' of America which describes a classical model, that, *mutatis mutandis* is typical of all 'left' parties and organizations. As far as the openly bourgeois counterparts are concerned, they serve their bourgeois interests immeasurably better than the 'left' formations of the workers and poor sections. Nevertheless, they are ends in themselves for the bureaucracy and its hangers-on and a burden for society; their parasitism is *a priori* a bourgeois end in itself.

¹⁵ From this stems, among other things, the reactionary attempts of certain trade unions (in America, especially the AFL) to keep their professional groups 'small' in order to prevent the entry of new members, etc. Incidentally, nobody considers himself as 'irreplaceable' as the Labour bureaucrat. The more he shirks physical work, the less his knowledge of his capacities, the less can he imagine a 'set-up' without his valuable person.

¹⁶ 'Common Sense', which is invoked more frequently in America than anywhere else, takes the following features in everyday capitalism:

(a) Sammy Roderick, captain of a fishing ship, threw the results of four days' fishing, 22,000 lb. of bream, back into the water because he could not find a buyer. Numerous telephone conversations with fish brokers in New York and other markets had remained unsuccessful. (A.P. from Stonnington, U.S.A., 15th June, 1949). Here now is the common-sense commentary which, of course, the journal concerned about religion and morality dutifully swallowed: 22,000 lb. of

(Continued at foot of next page)

no power of disposal and out of the possession of which they are swindled partly by the mechanism of the system (in this connection especially wars, trade crises, stock exchange crashes, inflation and the whole currency complex), and partly by the innumerable parasites.

Along with the passive are to be found active victims — the subjectively honourable or dishonourable employers, business men, managers, bankers, politicians, generals; finally, the adventurers, stock exchange jobbers, gangsters, etc., who mutually maltreat, harass, denounce, ruin, shoot each other or who — when the times change morals — are solemnly hanged at Nuremberg and Tokio according to all the rules of modern judicial murder. Of course it makes a tremendous difference whether one is an active or a passive victim, but all are prisoners of the system; for none does rational 'security' exist.¹¹ It is, however, a tenfold misfortune for the working masses that in the course of selling and buying back their labour power (the buying back occurs through the acquisition of means of subsistence which as a general rule restores ever less than the average expended labour power) those middlemen who are known under the collective name of 'Labour bureaucrats' have to be added to all their other burdens.

¹¹ Another picture drawn from everyday capitalist life. It is reported from New York that business bankruptcies have increased markedly there in the week concluding June 16th. One hundred and ninety-six commercial and industrial undertakings fell into difficulties in the week mentioned. In the preceding week there were 'only' 174 crashes. In 1948, on the contrary, there were 'only' 100 and in 1947 'only' 66 bankruptcies in the corresponding week. It is well-known that there are fraudulent bankruptcies and genuine bankruptcies but nobody knows how many people suffered each week. For the 'finest' flowering of the dog-eat-dog morality of capitalism, one need only remember here the American gangster wars (conducted with the aid of corrupt lawyers, judicial and local authorities) and the methods of Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, etc. There the characteristic feature of people *profiting* from the capitalist system, not only turning against one's adversaries but extending their circle 'as a precaution' and removing one's closest accomplices in succession, stands out more clearly than in the veiled forms. It is a feature which takes us back into the atmosphere of disintegrating ancient empires and is deliberately cultivated by all Stalinist parties.

helpless little living things had to suffer indescribably for the mere private amusement of the system and should be proud that 'profit is the ignition system of our economic engine' (we shall return to this utterance by an American governmental luminary). Unfortunately, the 'ignition' misfired — the loss is aggravated by the costs of the squandered labour power (including the 'forwarding back' into the water), of material and the many trunk calls, benefiting the telephone companies which, on their part, spend millions on absolutely nonsensical advertisement and 'to explain' to the customer why they cannot accept his orders and have to increase their fees.

(b) Since Monday, 13th June, about 600 tons of fresh vegetables are being destroyed daily. Reason: The minimum (!) prices demanded cannot be obtained at Dutch auctions. Reason for the reason: Vegetable exports to Western Germany had to be stopped because the sum of \$3,500,000 provided for under the Bizonal-Dutch trade agreement from April 1st to June 30th is already exhausted. The export trade of Bizonia is carried out on a dollar basis. Dutch newspapers declare that vegetables must be destroyed because too small (!) a dollar amount has been released for the importation of Dutch vegetables to Western Germany. The value of the excess vegetables has been estimated at approximately 1 million dollars per week (!) (A.P., Amsterdam, 16.6.49). The journalle remains speechless. We have to add to the commentary under (a) only this: A curse on that nation which does not hurl life and goods into Orcus for minimum prices!

This bureaucracy is not merely an additional vampire (that is by no means the worst!) but it also ruins the elementary mass movements, poisons the consciousness of many individuals and bolsters up the system at a point where, on account of its brutality and senselessness, it would be most highly vulnerable. The following assertion is no literary exaggeration: The modern misery is the work of the Labour bureaucracy. If parties and 'Labour parties' to-day still have millions of voters and the trade unions millions of members, it is not a reflection of any special 'confidence' in them except for family- and friend-circles of the bureaucracy which participate in the parasitism. Their alleged influence is actually only the expression of the compulsory situation (manifested as direct State compulsion in the Stalinized world) in which the masses also find themselves because they *must* entrust themselves in the last resort to one of the existing institutions as a result of tradition, habit, milieu or chance criteria. The fluctuations in the organizations and at elections demonstrate that the masses follow the political booms and 'experiment' with the parties. In spite of this, a changing percentage always remains 'outside the organizational and election machinery, and long bitter experience has confirmed the old popular belief that *all* parties are no good!

13

The problem of political organization accordingly focusses itself on the question of the nature of a party which will be capable of performing its task and which will provide guarantees against the degeneration which has always occurred. The answer is simple enough and follows from the preceding investigations which permit no possibility for misunderstandings and self-deception regarding masses, individuals and institutions or their mutual inter-relations. Once it has been granted that in capitalist society everything without exception becomes a commodity on the one hand and that, on the other, the most heroic idealism of single individuals as well as organizations conceived out of the purest motives cannot protect itself against being transformed into an end in itself (fetish) composed of many ramifications, it follows that it is primarily this process of becoming autonomous which must be absolutely prevented by the lay-out of the organization. In practice, therefore, the demand arises that political organization in the traditional sense be destroyed thereby making possible a movement directed at the effective alteration of the existing relationships. For the purpose of theoretical clarification, the following is to be added:

The modern emancipation movements relied on theories and on the material interests of the oppressed, mainly the proletarians. They fell of necessity into the most disgusting degeneration, because although theories and material interests in themselves are, of course, indispensable and cannot under any circumstances be excluded, they represent only half of the necessary pre-conditions and in everyday practice afford no guarantee against abuse, falsification, corruption, violation and fetishization. In contradistinction to this, the democratic movement tries to find its guarantee, which historical experience has proved to be indispensable, by directly revolutionizing from the outset all forms of organization and activity, in their very *forms*. The attack on commodity relationships in bourgeois society is directed first of all against the institution which should provide the formal means for transformation, i.e. against its own party. These formal means can be

adequately characterized in the following way: The party must incorporate and anticipate the organization of the future society in all essentials, that is, it must manifest the outlines in skeletal form. By which is meant that first, it must immediately begin within itself practically to dissolve bourgeois relations; and secondly, that it must, as the party, *be* the direct (organic) dissolution of these relations. Of course, in so far as it fights politically and organizes the political struggle that completely belongs to the bourgeois sphere, it is in that respect still a bourgeois party; *and* it is, at the same time, not a bourgeois party (or a party at all) in so far as in the very act of constituting itself it departs from the bourgeois framework, excludes by its structure any possibility of thingification (i.e. of becoming an end in itself) and continuously cancels itself out as a party.

14

The formula of the party is directly its practice. The guarantees it provides are *material* guarantees which are inherent in and inseparable from its existence. Its foundation is the recognition that institutions are not to be protected by the people but the people are to be protected from their ruin by the institutions. For what men may think of themselves concerning the question of guarantees is of even less import than concerning other realms. For the party only the uncomfortable thesis is valid that man is what he eats and what conditions make of him.¹⁸ His nature is the nature of his environment — should he want to change it he must begin by changing the conditions on which he depends. However, it is not for ideological nor philosophical reasons but because of the inescapable need for guarantees that the democratic movement decides to eliminate all illusions about men.

The democratic movement states that from the outset particularistic interests are no longer to be pursued and demonstrates it not by idle phrases and solemn vows but by the elimination of any possibility of exercising material domination over individuals or the general public. Power and domination derive from the possession of money, the ownership of means of production, the institutions and their bureaucracies. There must no longer be any of this in the party: It must not invest any money in property, mortgages, and undertakings; it must own no offices, houses, presses, in short, no apparatus whatever and no appointed bureaucracy. Its guarantee against becoming a thing in itself thus resides like a form of circular reasoning in its own pre-supposition: Incapable of incorporating material interests within its framework and of dominating materially, it is also incapable of representing class interests or political sectional interests. Whilst within it material advantages and social security for a bureaucracy are unattainable, the special party interest only exists in the sense of practically overcoming it for there is an immediate transition to the general task of

¹⁸ This also applies to people who are described as 'idealists' and who, without irony, wholly deserve the designation. Cultural philosophical babblers of all kinds naturally waste a great deal of energy on the mystification of the simple fact that it is the conditions which make the idealists but it just requires the stupidity of a cultural philosopher not to perceive: an idealist would not have had the least opportunity to risk his life in the fight against any evil if . . . the evil were removed.

social liberation without domination by a new class. Only on the basis of achieved freedom is the true special interest of the individual re-established which in capitalist society has no possibility of developing itself and becomes reduced to the caricaturish types of profit-hungry, profit-producing and profit-parasitic beasts.

15

The concept of the party is, of course, merely the beginning, but the beginning immediately has in itself some peculiar consequences.

First of all, with the disappearance of the appointed bureaucracy, the material distinction between 'leaders' and members within the party relationships also disappears. With it vanishes the need for an otherwise 'indispensable' party — or organization statute, and the quarrels arising from it. The party declares: Statutes are exclusively for the protection of the bureaucracy; they provide the 'juristic' framework for holding the bureaucracy together and are the weapon with which, in the spirit of bourgeois law, they defend their position, their privileges and their interests *against* the members.

Furthermore, with the abolition of the bureaucracy, the party conception combats the restrictions and disastrous effects of competition and the division of labour. To the extent that division of labour exists in literary, propagandistic and organizational activity, it is not dictated by the necessity of earning money and does not express itself as a professional fixity. Competition, and the division of labour without a view to profit and professional existence lose their capitalist form and are transformed into true human self-affirmation; free competition as voluntary division of labour (in contrast to those compelled by blind natural forces) in which the individual achievement no longer contradicts the interests of society and true social equality is established, because all places and manners of activity are interchangeable in principle. Within the voluntary division of labour talent calls talent to the plan, whereas the professional bureaucrat, driven by necessity, seeks to hold down any newcomer who might be able to make his position 'disputable' (from which again results the preparedness of the bureaucrat to falsify all his articles of belief rather than to make room for 'revolutionary' ideas which do not correspond with his position).¹⁹ With the removal of the bureaucratic caste the class-forming effect of the division of labour with all its consequences accordingly disappears automatically for the party, by which means the party *is*, on the one hand, the concrete dissolution of bourgeois relations, and, on the other hand, initiates this dissolution in its relation to the environment.

Finally, after dispensing with statutes and the formation of castes, the external organizational compulsion in the shape of 'discipline' ordered 'from above' disappears as well as the 'prescribed party opinion' which can be interpreted *ad lib.* by the bureaucracy, and which repulsively manifests itself in the 'official' tone, the intellectual superficiality, the political deliriantism and the 'party style' in its literature. In this way, the democratic movement achieves a relation to all things which is determined purely by content: in accordance with its peculiar lay-out it already combats formalism and schematism and insists on the equal rights of all available means of

¹⁹ Hegel: "The free person incidentally is not envious, but readily acknowledges what is great and sublime and rejoices that it is so".

expression.²⁰ Free formation of opinion replaces the 'internal' discussions (all differences are brought outside and publicly clarified) and replaces also the voting bound up with fractions, the bureaucratic wangling, manoeuvring, frauds and 'disciplinary proceedings'. The sole compulsion derives from the conscience of the individual who is prepared to stand up for his views and actions and to accept correction but who no longer knows the ridiculous fear of loss of prestige associated with concern for the maintenance of his 'position'.

16

In this way, the party has done away with all barriers between it and the environment and has shaped with complete transparency for every man, both its relation to society and its internal mechanism. Such a transparency, real, factual, immediately entering into consciousness, of all relations is only possible where commodity economy has ceased to exist with equal reality, factualness, immediacy. This aim is already achieved in the party, and, as soon as the end of commodity economy with its social effects is postulated and practically posed for it, other consequences come to light. This has become theoretically and practically possible alone through material, intellectual and scientific mass production on the *present level of development*, which, with equal indispensability, includes the most abundant experience in connection with that production on the one hand, and with State systems, movements, political parties, attempts at reform, etc., on the other. The party now demonstrates tangibly that the most extreme complication of the social question, as it is reflected in the party problem, tends indeed towards the change into its opposite, i.e. it suggests a quite simple solution. Its demonstration consists in the establishment of a system which, in its very functioning, precludes substantial aberrations, rendering impotent

²⁰ The State and the parties as States within the State fear the democracy of means of expression just as much as all real democracy which would be the end of the State- and party-economy *in toto*. Marx's words on the 'style question' should be inscribed in golden letters above every writing desk:

'My property is *form*, it is my spiritual individuality. *The style is the man*. And how! The law allows me to write, but on the condition that I write in a style other than my own. I have the right to show the face of my spirit, but I must first set it in the *prescribed expression*! What man of honour would not blush at such presumption and prefer to hide his head under his toga? At least the toga suggests the head of Jupiter. The prescribed expression only means putting a good face on a bad situation.

You admire the delightful variety, the inexhaustible wealth of nature. You do not demand that a rose should have the same scent as a violet, but the richest of all, the spirit, is to be allowed to exist in *only one form*? I am a humorist, but the law orders me to write seriously. I am bold, but the law orders my style to be modest. Grey and more grey, that is the only authorized colour of freedom. Every dewdrop in which the sun is reflected, glitters with an inexhaustible display of colours, but the sun of the spirit may break into ever so many different individuals and objects, yet it is permitted to produce only one colour, the *official colour*. The essential form of the spirit is *gaiety, light*, and you make *shadows* its only proper manifestation; it must be dressed only in black, and yet there are no black flowers. The essence of the spirit is always *truth itself*, and what do you make its essence? *Modesty*. Only the knave is modest, says Goethe: and you want to make such a knave of the spirit? Or should the modesty be that modesty of genius of which Schiller speaks, then first transform all your citizens and above all your censors into geniuses.'

('On the Recent Prussian Censorship Instruction').

from within the party activity tending towards becoming a thing in itself, and for this purpose reducing it to a purely administrative task. The reduction of the universally enslaving commodity economy to an administrative task (unrestricted production capable of expansion and its distribution in accordance with the amount of labour time rendered, until a point is reached where the *absolute* surplus of wealth also makes counting of hours superfluous and liberates creative forces as yet unimagined) is the strategic goal of humanity — the party accordingly enters everywhere into the generally desired dissolution of the existing conditions and serves as a living model for the transformation of the whole of society.

The only thing at all in the party which still has any 'commodity' tinge about it is connected with its literary activity, but the tinge is merely the extraneous connection with capitalist conditions and has the same significance for the party as for any working person who, a party man in his private life, brings his labour power as before to the market and, nevertheless, does not receive the slightest *profit*. On the literary side the dissolution of the commodity contradiction is (as spiritual production, which must find its printed expression, which must be 'sold' as printed material and which must be renewed) provisionally *one-sided* and therefore assumes a special form. This is to be understood in the following way:

A political movement which desires to alter conditions that have become unbearable cannot take a single practical step without revolutionizing the ruling conceptions that have also become unbearable, without, that is, disclosing the dependence of the intellectual on the material misery. To accomplish its task it needs a general and special literature serving propaganda and agitation. The means required for this will be supplied by members, friends, sympathizers, but must be so arranged and used that the literature created on *the part of the movement* does not lead to a new commerce in commodities but maintains the strict character of pure utility (in this case for the satisfaction of intellectual, political, social needs). The utility character of literature is preserved within the movement when it is no longer produced for profit nor expounds any professional or commercial interests. In other words, the literary contributions must be, firstly, plain 'contributions' in the literary sense of the word and should 'yield' neither fees nor royalties nor anything else for the authors²¹; secondly, in the sale of literature, the already mentioned offices, employees, canvassing on a percentage basis, etc., must disappear; thirdly, any surplus from the sale of

²¹ In the interests of the freedom of writers and writing, the writer for money within the party will be radically 'abolished'. Marx has impressively proved the necessity of this measure in his article, 'Debates on the freedom of the Press':

'The writer must, naturally, make a living in order to exist and write, but he must not exist and write in order to make a living. . . . The writer in no way regards his works as a *means*. They are *ends in themselves*: so little are they a means for him and others that, when necessary, he sacrifices his existence to *theirs*, and, like the preacher of religion, he takes as his principle: "Obey God more than men", men among whom he is himself included along with his human needs and desires. On the other hand, imagine a tailor, from whom I order a Parisian frock coat, bringing me a Roman toga because it is more in accord with the external law of the beautiful! *The first freedom of the Press consists in its not being a business.* The writer who debases it to a material means, deserves, as punishment for this inner lack of freedom, an external lack of freedom, namely censorship, or rather its existence is already his punishment.'

literature must be returned to production and serve its expansion (in the ideal case, possible surpluses make contributions and donations quite redundant from a certain point on).

It is this limitation of commodity economy in the party which transforms its material affairs (and in perspective that of the 'State' which will no longer be a State as the instrument for the domination and the protection of the profit interests) into a transparent task of administration or of distribution that every normal individual after successful attendance at elementary school will be able to master easily. It is the liberation of humanity and the party from the party (from the State in miniature which, like the full-scale prototype, has a penetrating stench of business) and the most significant consequence of this liberation is the direct connection and even the coalescence of the party with the masses.

17

Coalescence or identification of the party with the masses has as its pre-condition an organic reciprocity between the two. In this connection, the highest valid principle is the recognition, which has become increasingly widespread since the time of Adam Smith, that the differences in natural talents between individuals are in reality much less than we believe. About such differences, Adam Smith says that they 'are not so much the *cause* as the effect of the division of labour'. To which Marx added concretely that 'In principle there is less difference between a navvy and a philosopher than between a watch-dog and a greyhound'.²² If this recognition is implemented, then the first step towards the dissolution of the masses, towards their individualization, has been taken; it *will be* implemented, however, and is identification with the masses, when the party directs its entire activity to the overcoming of the conditions of mass existence (*historically generated* and now *become historically superfluous*). The party enjoys a right to existence only as a tool which, like production capable of unlimited development and applicability, is nevertheless susceptible to being handled by the masses themselves. No matter what the external political conditions may be; whether those of illegality (as in Stalinist Europe and Asia, and some colonies); of semi-legality (e.g. Western Germany, where one needs a 'licence', which is really an officially supplied and 'voluntarily' worn muzzle); or of legality — the organizational life of the party is marked always by simplicity and clarity, always thousands of unprepared people can enter and direct it, always it remains transparent to and controllable by all.

Once again, this is achieved by the concept of the party which knows that under capitalist conditions the masses are excluded from theoretical understanding and that therefore it can only be grasped by them or penetrate their consciousness as a *practical* movement. Since in the conditions described here nobody has any longer the opportunity to attain to a higher social prestige by means of the party than that which he enjoys independently of it; since the party no longer elevates itself materially above the

²² This will naturally offend certain commonly encountered 'philosophers', who for this attitude have only to be deprived of their various navvies to plunge them into an intellectual and moral position which would shame a navvy because he is endowed with more spiritual substance by Nature than those 'philosophers' on the highest peaks of their 'achievements'.

conditions of mass existence and introduces a division of labour *voluntary* throughout, it coalesces with the people and arouses their deepest need: The need for individualization and quality production (suppressed in the midst of capitalist barbarism); the expansion of this quality production will end the mass life with its barracks, living hells, labour slavery and the eternal cycle 'war, crisis, hunger, epidemics, bad bread, potatoes, ersatz, stultifying newspapers, etc.).

Taking for its point of departure the all-sided suppressed need for individualization, the democratic movement decisively refuses to repeat the shortcomings of all political organizations and to descend in its literary activity to the level of alleged 'popularity', something the masses from the cradle to the grave have had more than enough of, because it is the level of their conditions of existence maintained by force. Here a parallel has become evident. The more material mass production increases under capitalism, the greater the misery of humanity — the more the 'Workers' Parties' have devoted themselves to intellectual mass production, the less have they been able to satisfy any needs and the more intensively have they contributed to the general decline and servitude of the masses. The liberation of mankind can only be accomplished when as many individuals as possible have at their disposal sufficient knowledge and fight with its help against literary, scientific, artistic and political deception, against stupidity and sham knowledge in every form.²³ Love of truth based on ignorance manifests itself in the political sphere as demagoguery and idiocy; proved knowledge enables the movement to understand the impulses of the masses, to lend them striking political expression and to illustrate that the problem of liberation from capitalist insanity is for the masses no theoretical but a practical problem.²⁴ Only from practical progress do increasing numbers of individuals

²³ Disraeli was of the opinion that nine-tenths of all books were nonsense. The facts to-day are even uglier: 99 per cent. of all printed works are nonsense and muck, and in contradistinction to many industrial mass articles there has not even been any crying need for them.

²⁴ Why we did not initially call for petitions to the Washington Government, but rather for resistance to the measures of the Allies, is worth reflecting upon. The masses did not have the occasion to hear us but they utilized the first opportunity offered to break through the legalism of the official leaderships and to prevent the dismantlings to the best of their powers. We do not calculate on what the bourgeoisie, the leaders, the ideologists, the masses, etc., *desire*, but on what they *must* do. If, for example, further development primarily depends upon the development of America, then Europe and Asia *must* resist the American plans for world domination (the *Pax Americana* of the ideologists). The same is true of the plans of the dark Georgian in the Kremlin, who may very soon learn that the masses know very well how to utilize any possibility of resistance, such as exists potentially in the renewed Church struggle (this struggle in regard to freedom of religion, Press, speech, and assembly, is to be given the most unqualified support). We cannot predict a peaceful development. The bourgeoisie and its parasitic hangers-on are blind and deaf to all signs and will defend themselves tooth and claw against even a majority of 90 per cent. of the people who would not deprive them of their fortunes and incomes, but merely desire to establish production for use. One must calculate on and be clear about the fact that the majority will be placed in a position by the minority where they will have to compel the execution of their decisions and measures (for their part, democratic and peaceful). The naked *practical* bourgeois materialism, which the ideologists so

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find access also to the theory which is absolutely necessary for the movement: they emerge, that is, from the masses and become conscious conquerors of bourgeois conditions, which in the same measure rest upon the material *and* spiritual servitude of the masses.

18

Ideas do not drop from the sky. Intimate acquaintance with philosophy and scientific discipline; lengthy, extensive experiences, investigations and reflection in the manifold fields; repeated starts, deviations and experiments; to which must be added the change in the total world situation brought about by the *absolute* economic preponderance of America, which arose during the second world war — all this was required in order to arrive at the following results: That (a) the idea of a movement could be conceived, the essence of which is only to be sought in its relation to the environment and which has an independent existence through nothing else but the constant renunciation of this existence, in its connection with its contrary (the masses individualizing themselves). That (b) the movement should base itself politically upon an economic plan which contrary to all previous endeavours takes world economy and the immediate possibility of the increase of wealth as its point of departure, which rejects the *rule* of the proletariat as an absurd contradiction, and for the first time wants to overcome bourgeois society only with such means as the latter has itself organically produced.²³

The simplicity of the formula for the party and the plan is the outcome of a development appearing to be almost hopelessly complicated. Being is becoming and becoming is being. The greater passes through the smaller; freedom grows out of servitude carried to its end. It is the same with the democratic movement as with all other things — it *is*, while it *becomes*; it

²³ There is no organic connection between the 'dictatorship' of the *proletariat* and capitalist production. That is the reason why after the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, of the Third International, only the dregs finally remained — the Stalinist riff-raff and the professional crooks.

eagerly impute to *philosophical* materialism and the 'masses', has indeed never been so cynically, so shamelessly, so brutally proclaimed as a confession of faith than by the American Secretary of Commerce, Sawyer, before the Convention of the National Association of Manufacturers at the end of last year. Thus to a worthy audience Sawyer, as the representative of the government, delivered a tirade which reads like an invitation to corruption to the — Government representatives:

'First of all, Government representatives should remember that business men are working for profits. Profit is the main motivation of business; it is the ignition system of our economic engine. The importance of profit must be recognised and utilized.'

It should be underlined that Sawyer's speech enjoyed the advance approval of President Truman. It was, of course, delivered *after* the Presidential election of November 2nd, 1948. In his election speeches, Truman inveighed against 'gluttons of privilege' and 'Wall Street reactionaries' — now he pacifies the big employers in a Press conference — they have 'nothing to fear' from his programme. The significance of profit was so much recognized and utilized that the whole 'social' programme of Truman was nullified by it. The die-hards consoled themselves, however, that 'at least' one (they do not dare to say: exceedingly modest) 'building project' was accepted. There are no idols from whose shoulders the protective purple mantle made from religion, morality, public welfare, common weal and similar materials, so lightly falls as from the idol profit. Capitalism would not be capitalism if it had not produced many upright idealists from all social layers, who were repelled by the disgusting nakedness of this rabid idol and desire better things.

becomes, while it is. But as a party it has so specifically constituted itself that it only represents 'incomplete' Being and can at no time deprive itself of the highest wisdom which has ever been expressed. The educator must himself be educated.

THE SOCIETY FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN SCIENCE

The following is a composite culled from a press release, application form and Newsletter (Vol. 1, No. 1) of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science. We hope to develop further means of co-operation with the Society.—
Eds.

After more than a year of preliminary meetings and background work, a group of scientists and engineers representing many fields of endeavour completed the formation of a new organization at Haverford College in September.

The constitution states the aims to be: 'To foster throughout the world a functioning co-operative tradition of personal moral responsibility for the consequences for humanity of professional activity, with emphasis on the constructive alternatives to militarism; . . . to embody in this tradition the principle that the individual must abstain from destructive work, and devote himself to constructive work, drawing the line between the two according to his own moral judgement; . . . to ascertain through open and free discussion the boundary between constructive and destructive work to serve as a guide for individual and group decisions and action; to establish and operate an employment service . . . for those individuals whose convictions necessitate leaving or refusing destructive work: to assist those individuals who suffer economic or legal difficulties because of . . . abstaining from . . . destructive activity.'

The preamble to the constitution declares that S.S.R.S. members will 'stand clearly against any war trend, whether in the United States, Russia, or any other country'.

Some officers elected until July 1st, 1950, are:

- President—Victor Paschkis, director of Heat and Mass Flow Analysis Laboratory at Columbia University
- Membership Chairman—William Scott, physicist at Smith College and Brookhaven National Laboratory
- Educational Chairman—Franklin Miller Jr., physicist at Kenyon College.

President Paschkis said that scientists had usually omitted all the social and moral aspects of their work in their decisions as to what problems to

tackle. He explained that the new society's members were exceptions to this tendency and that they traced their heterodoxy back to Leonardo da Vinci's invention of the submarine which he refused to describe publicly 'lest man put it to evil purposes'.

As a present-day example of 'scientific conscience', there can be cited Norbert Wiener who recently refused to put his knowledge at the disposal of the armed forces of this country.

A diversified membership is the aim of the S.S.R.S. All persons trained in pure and applied science, including medicine and engineering, as well as technicians, draughtsmen, etc., are eligible for membership.

Those trained in the physical sciences, especially the physicists, have been among the first to feel in their own professional lives the intrusion of the problem of social responsibility. On the other hand, one might say that a physician has to a large extent solved his problems when he chooses his vocation, which is universally thought to be one of unselfish sacrifice and devotion to humanity. Yet we have only to look at the barbarisms which have been perpetrated in Nazi Germany to realize that even medicine can be perverted to the destruction of humanity. In the immediate future we must deal with the problem of biological warfare and all that it implies. It is the hope of the S.S.R.S. that doctors, dentists, psychiatrists and others trained in biological science will not be deterred from joining the S.S.R.S., but will contribute their experience and background for the mutual good of all who are seeking answers to the perplexing questions of social responsibility.

Many fields of work would seem to be closed to those who wish to use their scientific training toward constructive ends. Nevertheless, there exists a great need for scientific services and research in many fields of endeavour which are not only non-destructive, but are constructively valuable for mankind. It is not out of the question to initiate, through the S.S.R.S., services or opportunities which do not now exist. However, at least at the start, our best function will be one of information.

It is no doubt true that many of the most worthwhile jobs are those that pay the least (in money). One of the first aims of the Occupational Division is to set up an employment service to bring together scientists and employers who do not wish to engage in war work.

Regional, foreign and functional units of the new society will be organized. English, German and Swiss scientists have expressed interest.

There are no barriers to membership because of race, creed or national origin. Provision is made for geographical representation on the Council. Membership will operate on a basis of open discussion and unanimous decision as far as possible, matters being brought to a vote only when all reasonable steps to secure unanimity have been exhausted.

Nathan Davidson

INDUSTRIAL MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

I

TWO Russian economists, Eugene Varga and Leo Mendelsohn, have performed the necessary economic acrobatics in order to perpetuate the obsolete theory of Finance Capitalism, in their book, *New Data for Lenin's 'Imperialism'*. Varga, whose reputation was made by juggling statistics to justify each nefarious twist and turn in Stalin's policies, is at present serving the function of scapegoat; nevertheless, his so-called economic deviations in regard to the coming crisis in the West, do not prevent him from contributing to a new text on Political Economy. This book, it has been announced, is to become part of the official catechism, along with such celebrated Alice-in-Wonderland tales as 'The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union' (edited by a commission of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., and authorized by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.). Varga's collaborator, Mendelsohn, found it obligatory to state, 'This theory (of finance capitalism) is one of the foundation stones of the programme of the Communist International'.¹ It is easy to see why Mendelsohn and Varga insist on this fallacy about finance capitalism if it is recalled that V. I. Lenin wrote a pamphlet, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, during his Zurich exile in the spring of 1916. This treatise has been turned into a sacrament by Russian economists, who turn the spigot of Lenin's revolutionary writings on and off as expediency dictates. One day the Comintern is 'revolutionary' and preaches that finance capitalist states cannot co-exist with Russian 'Communism'; the next day an imperialist war is transformed into a 'peoples' war', and the Kremlin lectures that 'different economic systems' (those of the West and Russia) can co-exist peacefully. To-day, during the 'cold war', the first interpretation is utilized by the Cominform to justify its political reorganization, while the latter line is shoved forth during their 'peace offensives'. Therefore, to state that the Stalinists maintain a theory, even an erroneous one, is absurd.

It is quite clear on what ground Mendelsohn, Varga, and their breed stand, but why should socialists, social democrats, liberals, and even conservatives be misled in viewing the present economic period as dominated by finance capital? That the mere superficial aspect of juridical titles of ownership — the separation of ownership from management in business organization as exemplified by that type of organization which has evolved through

¹ Eugene Varga and Leo Mendelsohn, *New Data for Lenin's 'Imperialism'*, International Publishers, New York, 1940, p. 269.

the instrumentality of stocks and bonds, i.e., the corporation — should cause the confusion of considering the financial form as a decisive factor, is a sad commentary indeed upon contemporary impoverished economic theory.

Products of the past high level of economic attainment were J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism*, which appeared in 1902 and expressed the viewpoint of an English bourgeois and pacifist, and the Austrian Marxist, Rudolf Hilferding, whose *Das Finanzkapital* (Finance Capital), published in 1910 — both of which Lenin used as important sources (especially the former text), for his canonized study. Hilferding, nevertheless, led Lenin seriously astray, as we can gather from the following quotation from Franz Neumann's *Behemoth*, an analysis of Nazi Germany:

'It is ironical that the exclusive concentration of National Socialist anti-capitalism on banking capital was preceded by the economic doctrine of the leading Social Democratic theorist, Rudolf Hilferding, who devoted a whole and deservedly famous book to showing how banking capital becomes the promoter "and finally the ruler in industry." . . .

'The economic theory of the Social Democratic party, however, lagged behind reality even before the First World War. For in 1910, when Hilferding's book was published, the theory of the supremacy of the banks over industry was no longer completely true. Emil Kirdorf, one of the leaders of heavy industry, the representative of the die-hard industrialists in Germany and a close friend of Hitler, who visited him on his 80th birthday and handed him the eagle shield of the Third Reich, had stated as early as 1905: Never has the power of the banks over us been as weak as it is today. Many competent economic observers in Germany shared Kirdorf's view.'²

The metamorphosis which occurred so early in Germany did not transpire in the U.S. until 1930.³ The defect in Lenin's pamphlet can be accounted for by the fact that he used pre-World War I statistics. "The very latest data then available to Lenin were the industrial census of 1907 for Germany, and

² Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism*, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1942, p. 321.

³ 'The investment banker (who personified finance capitalism in the U.S.-N.D.), combining the role of promoter, financier and bond salesman, has been largely instrumental in building up, reorganizing, and consolidating the nation's vast railroad network in the 1880's and 90's. Entering the industrial field after the long depression of the 90's, he was the outstanding figure in the great wave of promotions and combinations which culminated in the crisis of 1907; he took the lead in financing the victors in the World War of 1914-18; during the prosperity of the 20's he again turned his hand to promoting mergers and combinations, with still unconcentrated fields like public utilities, automobiles, food processing and retail distribution as his main sphere of activity, but without in the least neglecting the older fields of railroads and heavy industry. By 1929 he exercised sway over what were absolutely, if not relatively, larger aggregations of capital than ever before . . . in the short space of a single decade he has suffered a dramatic eclipse. . . . New large scale promotions and mergers . . . have been virtually non-existent since 1930.

'Businessmen, with their customary propensity to seek for causes on the surface of things, have been inclined to lay blame on the Securities Act of 1933 and on the Securities and Exchange Commission's administration of that legislation. These factors doubtlessly have played a part, but it is inconceivable that the trend of events could have been significantly different.'

Paul M. Sweezy, *The Decline of the Investment Banker*, Antioch Review, Spring, 1941, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 63.

that of 1909 for the United States,' Mendelsohn tells us and adds, 'Now (twenty years after Lenin wrote the "Imperialism"), however, we have the German census for 1925 and 1933, and the United States census for 1929 and 1933. Moreover, contemporary statistics also throws light on . . . France and Japan, with which Lenin did not deal, but which are of great interest because of the considerably more important role these two countries now play in the ranks of the imperialist powers. Finally, in 1934, figures became available for the first time on . . . British industry as a whole.' A legitimate excuse can be made for Lenin's faulty analysis of Germany, since not enough time had elapsed to show clearly what the ramifications of this economic transformation were. A Stalinist apologist, like Mendelsohn, may not have understood the statistics he was working with, but some acquaintance with latter-day economic literature is the least one can expect. He should have known that Henryk Grossman in his *Das Akkumulations — und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des Kapitalistischen Systems* (The Law of Accumulation and Collapse of the Capitalistic System), which appeared in Leipzig, during 1929, was the first seriously to describe the new economic development and point a critical finger at Hilferding. Franz Neumann and Paul M. Sweezy, both of whom presented the new development for the English reading public, acknowledged Grossman's pioneering role, even if only in footnotes.

In developing the thesis that the transitory period during which finance capitalism was dominant has passed and that the stage of industrial monopoly capitalism has replaced it, we will dwell not only upon economic ramifications of this transition but attempt to indicate its socio-political implications, something which has never been attempted before.

II

During the early days, when free competition characterized capitalism, the bankers played a role subservient to industry. Bankers channelized and advanced funds to industrialists, causing the acceleration of capitalistic accumulation,⁴ much like stoking coal in a furnace. By means of the credit

⁴ In his magnum opus, *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (published in 1817), David Ricardo was able to postulate on purely bourgeois grounds, the limits of the present profit system — because of the process of capitalist accumulation: 'The natural tendency of profits then is to fall. . . . This tendency, this gravitation as it were of profits, is happily checked at repeated intervals by the improvements in machinery connected with the production of necessities, as well as by discoveries in the science of agriculture, which enable us to relinquish a portion of labour before required, and therefore to lower the price of the prime necessary of the labourer. . . . Long, indeed, before this period (when 'no capital can . . . yield any profit whatever' — N.D.), the very low rate of profits will have arrested all accumulation, and almost the whole produce of the country, after paying the labourers, will be the property of the owners of land and the receivers of tithes and taxes.'

'This external limit to (capitalist — N.D.) progress had been foreshadowed a decade before *The Wealth of Nations* by Sir James Steuart', states Maurice Dobb in his *Political Economy and Capitalism*. In a footnote he adds, not only Steuart in *An Inquiry Into the Principles of Political Economy* (1767), but 'Turgot, the Physiocrat, had also, about the same year, drawn attention to this fact'. Even more interesting in this connection is Dobb's quotations from Karl Marx: 'Those economists who, like Ricardo, regard the capitalist mode of production as absolute, feel nevertheless that this mode of production creates its own limits: and therefore they attribute this limit, not to production, but to nature (in the theory of rent).'

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system scattered capital formations were funnelled into industrial concerns. The credit system's process has been aptly described as 'a formidable weapon in the competitive struggle', and is the mechanism for the unification or centralization of capital formations. The reciprocal growth of industry and banking institutions in the confines of free domestic competition was transformed into monopolistic international competition. Small-scale production gave way to large-scale production under the pressure of competition. Cartels, syndicates, and trusts arose. Monopoly capitalism is the attempt, partially successful, to eliminate or limit competition. Naturally, the struggles between industrialists, labour and industry, banks and industry, signifies the clashing of atomized capitalistic economy. The advent of monopoly capitalism brought about a fierce fight between banks and industry. Although industry realized super-profits from exporting capital to colonial areas, in the main it fought to preserve the *status quo*, i.e., existing investments. Banking interests played a more stimulating role at this historic juncture. In order to weaken the position of their opponents, the industrial capitalists, they sponsored loans, exported capital, and engaged in more daring types of investments. The result of this friction between industrial and banking capital led finance capital to extend the area and number of commodity producers for the world market, despite monopoly capitalism's compulsion to overcome competition. As a result of this struggle some, although very few, industrial concerns were able to maintain their independence from finance capital. On the other side many amalgams between industrial and finance capitalists occurred. But on the whole, the most important result was that finance monopoly capitalism emerged from the struggle victorious. This victory, however, was a short lived one.

Once finance monopoly capitalism became thoroughly entrenched, the perspective of exporting capital so as only to realize a quick and easy profit was altered, and the conservative industrialist's point of view won the day. Preserving existing investments became the guiding principle. The banks did not stand to benefit from any competitive battle between concerns under its sway. Maximum profits 'other things being equal' are 'achieved in a particular branch of industry when competition has been completely excluded'. 'Hence,' Hilferding went on to declare, 'the striving of banks for complete monopoly'. Industrial concerns able to maintain their independence in time grew to such proportions that their own internal accumulation of capital (from profits) not only released them from dependence on banks for their own expansion, but enabled them to enter the banking field themselves.⁵

⁵ 'The relation between industrial and banking capital passed through three stages; (at this point F. Neumann refers the reader in a footnote to the pages, 574-9, in H. Grossman's book, *Das Akkumulations — und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des Kapitalistischen Systems* — N.D.) in the early stage of large scale industry, capital
(Continued at foot of next page)

(Capital, III, p. 283). Elsewhere Marx said: 'That the bare possibility of such a thing (progressive fall of the profit rate) should worry Ricardo shows his profound understanding of the conditions of capitalist production. . . . What worries Ricardo is that the rate of profit, the stimulating principle of capitalist production, the fundamental premise and driving force of accumulation, should be endangered by the development of production itself.' (Ibid., p. 304). (Maurice Dobb, *Political Economy and Capitalism*, International Publishers, New York, p. 89).

Banking interests ceased to play a dominant role, since they were no longer vitally needed to aid the accumulation process. The complexion of monopoly capitalism passed from a financial to an industrial one. Sweezy sums up the metamorphosis as follows:

'Hilferding mistakes a transitional phase of capitalist development for a lasting trend. It is true that during the period of the combination movement itself, when corporations and mergers are in the process of formation, the banks are in a strategic position which enables them to extend their sway over the key areas of the productive system. The process of combination, however, cannot continue indefinitely. The ultimate limit would be reached in any given industry when only one firm is left, but as a rule the process comes to a halt considerably before this ultimate is actually reached. Competition of a dangerous kind is generally effectively abolished when something of the order of three-fourths to four-fifths of a given industry is in the hands of a few large companies. Beyond this point the tendency to further combination is greatly weakened and may even be altogether offset by counteracting forces. Rival groupings of large capitalists continue to exist and each always hopes to be able to improve its position at the expense of the others; each needs bases in the most important industrial sectors as a source of strength and as possible counters in a game of bargaining with the others. Once the spectre of cut-throat competition has been banished and a *modus vivendi* for the most general and necessary monopolistic ends has been discovered, further combinations occur less frequently and may soon cease altogether.

'When this stage has been reached the position of the banks undergoes a sharp change. The function of issuing new securities, on which their power was originally founded, becomes much less important. The large monopolistic corporations find themselves, in direct proportion to their success (i.e. profitability), in possession of internal sources of funds, not only in the form of profits which can be accumulated instead of being distributed as dividends to shareholders, but also in the form of depreciation, depletion, obsolescence, and other so-called 'reserve' accounts which are to an ever increasing extent turned to the purpose of accumulation. With these internal sources of additional capital at their disposal, corporate managements are to a greater or lesser degree freed from dependence on the market for new securities as a source of capital, and by the same token they are freed from their dependence on bankers. To be sure, where the influence of the banks is firmly entrenched this does not mean an

formation within industry is not sufficient for expansion. Industry needs large amounts of capital in single lumps. The banks organized the credit system by channelizing the savings of the masses, especially to the railroads. In this period the demand for money capital is indeed high, and correspondingly the power of the banks, whether in the form of the private investment banker as in the United States, or in that of the joint stock banks as in Germany. In the second phase, however, the accumulation of capital within industry increases to such an extent that industry becomes almost independent of the banks and is able to finance expansion out of undistributed profits. In the final phase, that of National Socialist monopoly economy, (still better statified economy — N.D.) industry is often incapable of investing all its savings in its plant. It begins to conquer banks and insurance institutions. . . .'

F. Neumann, *op cit.*, p. 322.

immediate decline in their power. But in the long run, economic power which is related to no economic function is bound to weaken and eventually disappear. This is exactly what happens to the power of the banks in so far as it is based on control over the issuance of new securities. The function itself atrophies and the power to which it gave rise declines, leaving the banks in a secondary position. Bank capital, having had its day of glory, falls back again to a position subsidiary to industrial capital, thus re-establishing the relation which existed prior to the combination movement. This does not mean that capitalism in general returns to its earlier state; on the contrary, monopoly and the dominance of a small upper layer of big capitalists become solidified and gradually extended to take in ever larger sectors of the productive and distributive system. Only their base is industrial capital and not, as Hilferding thought it would be, bank capital."

Under industrial monopoly capitalism when funds are needed by an industry beyond its own resources the state replaces the function of the banks. In the United States, after the stock market crash of 1929, large scale plant expansion was financed principally by the federal government under the 'defence' programme. To-day the U.S. government controls such credit expenditures as the European Recovery Plan, extends loans to South America, Israel, etc., and holds the upper hand in The International Monetary Fund and The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Totalitarian countries and declining liberal democracies in Europe reveal the growth of economic statification more clearly than does the U.S.⁶ Just as England served to mirror the growth of advancing capitalist countries in the 19th century, so in the stage of economic retrogression, backward Russia, furthest along in world decline, exhibits most sharply the tendencies which appear only faintly in the most advanced countries. We have as yet to fill in the content of the formula 'industrial monopoly capitalism', as well as the assertion that Russia is the pathfinder for present-day retrograde development.

III

If we consider capitalism to be that stage of economic evolution where the worker is divorced from the means of production (as opposed to serfdom and slavery) and sells his labour power as a commodity on a competitive market,⁷ then, viewed from the labour process, capitalism can be summed up

⁶ Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1946, pp. 267-8.

⁷ Authorities in the field declare that: 'With a frequency not seen since the heyday of mercantilism and on a scale without precedent, national states responded through governmentally devised control schemes. Governments, from the most totalitarian to the most democratic, have resorted to compulsory cartelization of many fields not adapted to joint control through voluntary action of private producers.'

George W. Stocking and Myron W. Watkins, *Cartels in Action: Case Studies in International Business Diplomacy*, The Twentieth Century Fund, New York, 1946, p. 4.

⁸ It must be borne in mind in the discussion that follows that the relationships of the labour process alone, while an integral part of capitalism (at least as it has existed to the present), are not sufficient to define the system. The relationships of

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as the system where free wage labour prevails.⁸ A wage labourer has the freedom to enter into a contract with his employer, and is paid *according to the socially necessary labour time required to maintain life and to reproduce*, which, of course, is simply the prevailing subsistence level. Coercion can be

⁸ For purposes of analysis, the pivot of an economic system is its assumption of what determines a commodity's value. The assumption that congealed labour time, abstractly contained in the commodity, rather than the concrete labour that moulded it, determines a commodity's value, and the ramifications of socially necessary labour time, is Marx's theoretical growth from, and contribution to English classical political economy. In England by 1830, the great strides in classical political economy came to an end, and around forty years later, with the rise of 'the new utility theories of Jevons and the Austrian School', the fundamental economic cleavage occurred which exists to this day. (Maurice Dobb's excellent chapter on 'The Trend of Modern Economics in his *Political Economy and Capitalism*'). The explanation of the enigma, why the industrial revolution failed to solve the elementary but most pressing of human needs, i.e., bread and butter problems, when the millennium seemed at hand, split economists into two camps: bourgeois theorists who focused their analysis on the process of commodity circulation; and those against the *status quo* (only Marxian economists who inherited what was positive in classical political economy and advanced it, e.g., in the labour theory of value), illuminated economics from the opposite pole, explaining the process of circulation as subservient to and determined by the process of commodity production. Marx offered the only solution, production for use and not for profit.

In employing negative criticism to quote Hegel, '... the refutation must not come from without; ... The true refutation must penetrate the stronghold of the opponent, and invade the sphere of his power; to attack him abroad and to carry one's point, where he is absent, does not further matters at all'. N. Bukharin in his most valuable book, *The Economic Theory of the Leisure Class*, utilizes this method. After disproving the axioms of premises of bourgeois economy, he pushed his critical analysis further by accepting the faulty economic postulates of Bohm-Bawerk, e.g., in demonstrating that the structure of this economic system collapses under the weight of its own contradictions.

Russian economists and apologists do not exactly fit into the categorical division presented above. A study of the implications of an unsigned article entitled 'Some Problems of the Teachings of Political Economy' (published in the Soviet monthly journal *Pod Znamenem Marksizma* — meaning Under the Banner of Marxism — No. 7-8, July-August, 1943, which the International Publishers printed in English as a pamphlet, 'Political Economy in the Soviet Union') was made by Raya Dunayevskaya in 'A New Revision of Marxian Economics' (*American Economic Review*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, September, 1944). Dunayevskaya reveals that, 'Instead of a theory, the article presents an administrative formula for minimum costs and maximum productions'. In admitting that the Marxist law of value functions in Russia, the anonymous author, speaking in line with 'the Central Committee of the Communist Party' and 'the All-Union Committee on Higher Education', indirectly confesses that capitalism functions in Russia. Marx's Capital is abandoned for bourgeois book keeping.

the production process are also necessary. This means the ramifications of meaning contained in the phrase 'production for profit' — i.e., the accumulation process, which, until recently, reproduced itself on an ever larger and extended scale with such rapidity as to make all previous stages of economic development appear as systems of simple reproduction. Now, as we shall point out, profit is best realized, and the aims of the reproduction process best served, by *contraction*. It follows that capitalism is dynamic, and a thing of many faces, but only one aim — profit. How best to serve this aim is the sole criterion by which the face is determined at any particular stage of development. Thus, applying the criterion, at one time we had *laissez faire*, now monopoly and statism; previously the financiers dominated monopoly, now the industrialists; to-day, in most countries, wage labour retains relative freedom, to-morrow the ends of the accumulation system may well best be served by employing slave labour.

used to make workers do unskilled labour; slaves and serfs can even be taught fine skills. But whereas a slave stops working if his overseer turns his back, and destroys — if he gets a chance — the tools which are the cause of his drudgery, the wretched 'wage slave' can be counted upon to drive himself. Besides, as has been pointed out innumerable times, slave labour requires an annual subsistence outlay from the slave owner, whereas free wage labour can be dismissed after a job is done, and must seek its own means of survival.

When Germany, a classical centre of industrial capitalism, adopted forced labour in the Gestapo's concentration camps, the question was posed; if the term free wage labourer becomes ludicrous because of the prevailing totalitarianism, and if seemingly non-capitalist forms of labour are being introduced, then is Nazi Germany still capitalist in economic content? Neumann, arguing in *Behemoth*, claims that the essential capitalist character of German economy was still preserved, since most workers were paid according to their *labour time*, and thus the determining capitalist quality was still intact. Neumann is right in maintaining that Germany, despite the revision of the nature of capitalist forms of ownership, was still capitalist, but for the wrong reasons, as we shall see below.

Free wage labour was an absolutely necessary condition for capitalist growth. In England the necessary labour for primitive accumulation was secured by forcing agricultural workers off the land and herding them into urban barracks to serve the needs of expanding industry. The barracks system and variations on the theme of forced labour are an old story.¹⁰ Rising capitalism could afford to give the labourer a greater degree of freedom (mobility, etc.) and take long strides on the road to liberty (freedom of Press, speech, and religion). These strides can be credited to the progressive nature of ascending capitalism. Capitalist decay, however, reinforces the elements of capitalist impurity, and the reversion to forced labour indicates the extent to which the malady has taken hold. Germany, as a part of the world division of labour, competing on the world market in order to survive, was so caught up in the dynamics of international capitalist competition that it would have been forced to adhere to the economic laws of capitalism, especially that of the falling rate of profit, even if every labourer in Germany had been a slave. An important aspect to be remembered is that Nazi Germany's chief competitors on the world market, which were the main deciding factors, produced domestically with free wage labour.

During the stage of capitalism's economic ascendance, because of the healthy possibilities of growth, lesser industrialized countries matured in the image of their more developed competitors. When these possibilities reached the saturation point, the struggle for survival forced contraction, the fierceness of competition forced less advanced countries to contract most sharply, indicating the path more highly industrialized countries must eventually traverse.

¹⁰ An amusing anachronism illustrates that within new forms vestiges still remain. As late as 1920, a visitor to Germany, reported that in Schleswig-Holstein the mediæval custom, *le droit du seigneur*, was still practised. The landowner had the option of sleeping on the wedding night with his tenant's wife. The retention of vestigial forms of labour pale into insignificance alongside of the reintroduction of forced labour where it once was done away with. These impurities in the labour process distort the pure economic categories.

Some may not be satisfied with the theoretical basis that has been formulated for the contraction of capitalism. The proof, however, is anchored in the metamorphosis from progressive to retrogressive capitalism. The first World War was fought for the re-division of the world markets, and it signified that there was no elbow-room left for healthy capitalist expansion. An analogy may help us to understand the nature of capitalist decay and contraction far better. A man with a hairline that is steadily receding must continue to go to the barber once a month for a trim. World War I can be marked down as the starting point of capitalist baldness. Now, despite its defects, Lenin's pamphlet, *Imperialism*, especially chapters V (The Division of the World Among Capitalist Combines) and VI (The Division of the World Among the Great Powers) thoroughly documents the fact that capitalist expansion had reached its profitable limit. Many regions in the world, principally in Asia, Africa, and South America, remain to this day untapped resources for capitalist penetration. World War II superficially appeared to have been fought by the 'have-not', and consequently fascist nations, for the redistribution of markets (the 'British estate').¹¹ The 'have' nations which emerged as victors strengthened the retrograde economic tendencies by creating economic bald spots (removal of German, Italian and Japanese competition through industrial levelling, a phenomenon economically unfeasible after World War I) despite the fact that those still fertile areas continue to grow. Yet the reorganization and industrial reduction of France and Poland, for example, by Hitler, indicates that all the participants in the last imperialist carnage fought precisely on the same ground, i.e. to eliminate competitors.

IV

The transformation of Germany from an imperialist competitor to a dismembered colony makes Russia the undisputed trail blazer of declining capitalism. The allegation that Russia is a capitalist state, and is, in fact, furthest along the road of statification, displaying most sharply all the features of present-day imperialism and economic contraction, may give rise to many objections. Leon Trotsky, exiled Bolshevik leader, who was assassinated by a Stalinist henchman in Mexico during 1940, presented paradoxically enough, the best reasoned defence of the Russian slum empire:

'Can the present expansion of the Kremlin be termed imperialism? First of all we must establish what social content is included in this term. History has known the 'imperialism' of the Czarist monarchy, etc. The

¹¹ Certainly the Axis nations aspired to a more 'equitable' share of the world market, if not the lion's share. In the *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office* (ed. Sontag and Beddie, U.S. Department of State, 1948) appears an account of the 'have-not' nations' plan to carve up the tottering British empire. On page 349, in a letter to Mussolini, Hitler explains his Russian campaign. Hitler believed Russian armed forces massed on his eastern front, cancelled the possibility of a full-scale offensive to conquer England. Because he felt such an offensive would require most of Germany's military strength, and consequently Russia could either blackmail him for more territory — with a resulting loss of prestige, especially before Japan — or even worse, by concluding a deal with England, and entering the war, Russia could have delivered Germany the death blow. Hitler wrote, 'I have, therefore, after constantly racking my brains, finally reached the decision to cut the noose before it can be drawn tight'.

driving force behind the Moscow bureaucracy is indubitably the tendency to expand its power, its prestige, its revenues. This is the element of 'imperialism' in the widest sense of the word which was a property in the past of all monarchies, oligarchies, ruling castes, medieval estates and classes. However, in contemporary literature, at least Marxist literature, imperialism is understood to mean the expansion policy of finance capital which has a very sharply defined economic content. To employ the term 'imperialism' for the foreign policy of the Krémelin — without elucidating exactly what this signifies — means simply to identify the policy of the Bonapartist bureaucracy with the policy of monopolistic capitalism on the basis that both one and the other utilize military force for expansion. Such an identification, capable of sowing only confusion, is much more proper to petty-bourgeois democrats than to Marxists.¹²

The flaw in Trotsky's position is that Lenin's 'finance capital' criterion of imperialism is obsolete. In the present period of industrial monopoly capitalism imperialism is most fully realized by the 'expansion of the Kremlin'. Capitalistic imperialism in the stage of industrial monopoly capitalism expands technology in one direction and contracts it twofold in other sectors. In a world where economic statification becomes pronounced (the state displacing the banks as regulator of the economy) and the division of the world into competing monopoly capitalist domains exists, imperialism becomes the vehicle for capitalism's self-annihilation.¹³

The waving of red flags and shouting of 'proletarian' slogans, accompanied by ostensible 'anti-imperialist' ideology on the part of Communist demagogues misleads many people with good intentions. If we put aside the

¹² Leon Trotsky, *In Defence of Marxism*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1942, p. 26.

¹³ It is of interest to contrast this definition with that given by V. I. Lenin for finance monopoly capitalism; however, what is really edifying is his attitude toward definitions and dates:

'... very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, because very important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined have to be especially deduced. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions, which can never include all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its complete development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will embrace the following five essential features:

- (1) The concentration of production and capital developed to such a high stage that it created monopolies which played a decisive role in economic life.
- (2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this 'finance capital', of a 'financial oligarchy'.
- (3) The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.
- (4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies which share the world among themselves.
- (5) The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed.

'Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed. ...

'Needless to say, all boundaries in nature and in society are conditional and changeable, and, consequently, it would be absurd to discuss the exact year or the decade in which imperialism "definitely" became established.'

V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, International Publishers, New York, 1939, pp. 89 and 90.

ideological trimmings of Stalinism and evaluate the content of Russian policy, however, most difficulties disappear.

Nations, like private industrial enterprises, must struggle with the omnipotent law of the falling rate of profit. Either accumulate capital and constantly alter the means and mode of production in order to remain on a par with the enemy, or succumb and withdraw from the rat race. For a nation to succumb means quite literally reduction to colonial status.

Modern Russia, rising from a status of semi-colonial vassalage to English and French finance capital in Czarist days, through a world war, through revolutions and counter-revolutions onto the road of national economic independence, introduced the most brutal police regime to accomplish its task. Victor Kravchenko's 'I Chose Freedom' gives an inkling of how the terrorism of a modern police state can permeate from the lowest depths to the summits of political power. The innumerable five year plans Russia has embarked upon have been compared with England's period of primitive capitalist accumulation, but there is this difference: at different ends of the industrial revolution they set an opposite series of effects into motion. Russia, unlike Nazi Germany, is no serious economic threat to America on the world market. In an otherwise amateurish brochure, it has been estimated that U.S. production is 'approximately four and one half times that of the Soviet Union'.¹⁴ Russia may be a geographic giant but it is an industrial dwarf. Yet it is the only serious contender the U.S. has for world domination, and, as a totalitarian power, it has a strong bargaining position against the U.S., simply because America is still a partially democratic country and must become a totalitarian-military state before it can act fully in correspondence with its world economic interests. It took Germany some 25-odd years to make its political superstructure congruent with its economic base. Until the U.S. makes this adjustment Russia can only prepare the conditions for American metamorphosis into a vigorous totalitarian imperialism. Russia, as the most dangerous and advanced cancerous growth, neutralized huge areas of the globe, a job America despite all the gold in Fort Knox cannot do by itself, and a task her Dutch, French and British retainers are bungling badly. Russia must ready itself against the day when the U.S. will be in a position to dismiss its services. It must do everything to strengthen its position or else drift into a colonial status à la England.

As a result of the second World War, Stalin added to his domain almost half of non-Russian Europe and large slices of Asia. The methods employed to integrate those areas were dictated by pressing economic laws, and revealed the counteracting tendencies to the falling rate of profit,¹⁵ generated by retrogressive capitalism:

¹⁴ Fritz Sternberg, *How To Stop The Russians Without War*, Trans. Manheim, J. Day Co., New York, p. 43.

¹⁵ An interesting critique of Marx's formulation of this law of declining profit and its counteracting tendencies, is made by Paul M. Sweezy in chapter VI of his text, *The Theory of Capitalist Development*. Unlike his British Stalinoid colleague, Maurice Dobb, who is nothing more than a stimulating commentator, Sweezy displays an acute sense for problems and an ability to extend himself theoretically into poorly explored areas — especially in regard to the termination of finance monopoly capitalism. If instead of reducing Lenin's defects in his *Imperialism* to terminological differences, to the dubious connotation of the term 'finance capital', and for blinding himself to Russian realities, Sweezy undoubtedly would have been able to develop the thesis of industrial monopoly capitalism.

(a) *Dismantling* of industrial equipment for shipment to Russia, and *destruction* of the industrial capacity of nations by outright technological destruction. This cannot be dismissed as simple plunder. Industrial dependence upon the imperial centre ensures national vassalage. This process of industrial levelling is carried out as fast as military, political, and economic expediency permits. Germany is an excellent example of the differences between American dollar imperialism and Russian totalitarianism. America destroys plants (war and peace industry alike), and dismantles industry, which it parcels out to her hangers-on in Europe and even to Russia through a series of deals (Potsdam, etc.). Russia, on the other hand, finds it necessary systematically to loot Germany and its East European satellites for itself. The destructive quality of this policy far outweighs the aspect of re-allocation of plants, machinery, and raw materials. The difference between Russian and American imperialism can be accounted for by Russia's pigmy industrial stature, which prevents it from affording as much leeway as America to its satellites. Its political 'freedom' affords Russia the possibility of acting with more rigour than democratic America, brutal as the latter's policies may be. Imperialism produces wastelands through the process of capitalism's self-erosion.

(b) Skilled labour is fettered to the plants that go to Russia. Scientists, engineers, technicians, and experts of all sorts are forced to leave their native lands and labour in 'the workers' paradise', the quadruply misnamed 'Union of Socialist Soviet Republics'. Sections of the population and, in some cases, whole peoples are forced to migrate and resettle (Germans and people of remote German origin from the eastern provinces of Germany, the Sudetenland, Poland and other East European countries, for example) not to mention large masses of people who have gone the way of the ten lost tribes of Israel. Parts of the population of Russian 'liberated countries' are thrown into 'industrial reserve labour camps' like their Russian fellow sufferers, and are compelled into slavery for their foreign master either at home or in Russia. Reduction of independent nations, even former imperialistic ones, to colonial status, with the inevitable destruction of technology, results in the splitting and atomization of a previously growing and united proletarian class.

Slave labour begins to replace the capitalist category of unemployment. Expanding capitalism always needed ever more workers, who were to be found in an industrial reserve army of unemployed (supplied by technological displacement and other factors). They were a source of cheap labour. Depression of the general wage rate by throwing large sections of the labouring classes into slave labour camps to perform unskilled tasks (swamp drainage, road building, mining, etc.) results in the use of proportionately more capital for industrial expansion than the usual wage outlay would permit, and is the principal means of keeping all the oppressed in varying degrees of bondage, thus creating the necessary atmosphere of sheer terror.

(c) Destruction of capital: In the U.S.S.R., this has primarily taken the form of organization of the economy on a permanent war basis, and, subsequently, squandering capital resources by first converting them into implements of destruction, second blowing them up or scrapping them for obsolescence, and then reproducing more war materials and repeating the cycle. Nazi Germany, the classical fascist economy, followed a similar

pattern, and for the same reasons. As profit rates fall, the 'natural' tendency would seem to be to reduce production (à la classical Marshallian economic 'laws') until the rate of profit recovers. But this cannot be done for two reasons: First it would increase the numbers of the unemployed and dissatisfied to a point dangerous to the political existence of the state; and second, distribution might break down completely, and with it production, because of the disproportionate loss of purchasing power (the so-called multiplier effect). Now, in Keynesian 'never-never-land' economics, the remedy is for the state to maintain distribution by sponsoring public-works, and production of necessary articles of consumption. In real life, of course, this never works beyond a very limited extent, because the state cannot allow it to work. In producing goods and services of a definite utility, as well as in producing for waste, profit must be realized, albeit at an ever-decreasing rate, to maintain the production system. However, when the production is for articles of (use) value, and consumers realize this value, they get the lion's share of the profit and the system is endangered. However, in production for destruction, the goods produced have no utility whatsoever for the producers (workers), and whatever profits are realized go to the capitalist powers that be, which in Russia, means to the state apparatus.

If we bear in mind the fact that the falling rate of profit dictates that the process must ever expand or be doomed, we need look no further for proof of our hypothesis than to the yearly increase in Russia's (and America's) share of the national budget devoted to arms and armaments *since the end of World War II*. Together with this increase there has been an even greater increase in the number and conviction of statements from official sources in both countries to the effect that no war is in sight.

In this connection it is interesting to examine the position of the United States as well as the Soviet Union. Because of her advanced position along the highway of accumulation, mere internal armament production is insufficient to counteract America's decreasing profit rates. She must find more artful ways of compensation by way of squandering her capital resources. And so she has, of which we will mention only a few. Most significant is export of arms — the Atlantic Pact and European Armaments Aid Programme now insure that the U.S.A. will take care of Western Europe's arms, as well as her own, and incidentally that the U.S.A. will effectively close to her 'allies' this temporary avenue of escape from the accumulation process. Secondly, capital is destroyed by means of ridiculous obsolescence replacements. Annually, the quality of manufactured products (automobiles are a good example — others are machine tools and housing) becomes poorer, while the amount of material required for their production increases. This can only be for the express purpose of insuring more and greater replacements. Last, we can only mention calculated destruction in product designing. For this the automobile will again serve as an example. Cars are now designed to operate at more than double the normal power usage of the average motorist. The waste in this item, alone, is prodigious, and it is only one indicative example of the prodigal waste dictated to American production by the economics of accumulation.

These expressions of imperialist accumulation have only one logical direction. They point the road to the re-introduction of serf or slave societies on the basis of modern technology. Trotsky misjudged this development. He

believed that the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, despite the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, nevertheless was not extinguished because the 'state property and planned economy' remained intact. He further believed that the qualitative degeneration of the 'worker's state' into capitalism would occur when the nationalized property was transformed into private property and planning became eliminated. (Leon Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* is the best and most elaborate exposition of his thesis that Russia is a 'degenerated worker's state'). Capitalism and that part of the world which is part of the international division of labour and so caught up in capitalist dynamics as to be governed by its laws, still exerts in those areas that expand at the expense of destruction elsewhere the process of capitalist concentration (ever more labour employed by expanding technology) and centralization (ownership merging under the pressure of competition). Capitalist accumulation congeals more and more capitalist atoms into capital formations, in the form of joint stock companies in the U.S., or through economic statification as in England or Russia. Due to the historical 'accident' of the Bolshevik revolution, Russia broke its chains from finance capital in 1917, and statification thus occurred earliest and in its most dominant form, giving it a tremendous push along the path of national monopoly. Russia as a highly statified capitalist country, will not follow the course of decentralization and deconcentration that Trotsky foresaw. Quite the contrary, it is introducing its own form of industrial monopoly capitalism into its colonial sphere.

The metamorphosis of monopoly capitalism signified the attempt to overcome the prevailing competition by freezing conditions, but international political anarchy frustrated these efforts. If one nation, as a giant monopoly, could eliminate all its competitors by reducing them to a colonial hinterland, then extended reproduction would cease, and simple reproduction would be reintroduced, freezing capitalism at a certain level of profit and thereby bringing about capitalism's self-cancellation. Imperialism bringing 'one world' would mean barbarism becoming the new social order.

V

Long before World Federalists and others discovered that the atomic bomb and biological warfare make world government imperative, political economy showed the necessity for abolition of the international anarchy of nations because of the tariff fights and imperialist wars, the depressions and unemployment, the totalitarianism and coerced labour, and all the other abominations that this anarchy produces. Capitalism's orientation towards a permanent war economy, even during the peace interims, heightens the destructive quality of retrogressive capitalism. Certainly new 'improvements' in the means of modern warfare intensify the need for a world organization. But capitalism's solution is no solution at all, unless barbarism and a Roman peace can be so considered.

Hobson thought that old empires were weakened for two reasons: 'economic parasitism', and dependence on armies composed of subject peoples. He saw a modern parallel:

'One of the strangest symptoms of the blindness of imperialism is the reckless indifference with which Great Britain . . . has gone farthest. Most of the fighting by which we have won our Indian Empire has been done by natives; in India, as more recently in Egypt, great standing

armies are placed under British commanders; almost all the fighting associated with our African dominions, except in the southern part, has been done for us by natives . . . the gigantic peril of a Western parasitism, a group of advanced industrial nations, whose upper classes drew vast tribute from Asia and Africa, with which they supported great, tame masses of retainers, no longer engaged in the staple industries of agriculture and manufacture, but kept in the performance of personal or minor industrial service under the control of a new financial aristocracy . . . groups of financiers, investors, and political and business officials, draining the greatest potential reservoir of profit the world has ever known, in order to consume it in Europe. The situation is far too complex, the play of forces far too incalculable, to render this or any other single interpretation of the future very probable: but the influences which govern the imperialism of Western Europe to-day are moving in this direction, and, unless counteracted or diverted, make toward some such consummation.'

Lenin, assessing these quotations from Hobson on page 104 of his pamphlet, reached this conclusion:

'Hobson is quite right. *Unless* the forces of imperialism are counteracted they will lead precisely to what he has described.'

Phrases such as 'financial aristocracy' aside, Hobson is right. 'The play of forces (are) far too incalculable, to render . . . any . . . single interpretation of the future very probable.' Parasitism as a feature of decay has certainly increased, and imperialist nations squeeze even more 'super-profits' from their colonies by 'clipping coupons'. Yet imperialist development did not proceed down the hypothesized path of plain parasitism, but turned from finance monopoly capitalism, which in general tended to widen the international division of labour by export of capital, into industrial monopoly capitalism, which destroys industrially advanced nations so that other imperialist nations may continue to exist. Another result was the general stunting of the growth of colonial areas, which capitalism once stimulated. Nevertheless, if we hypothesize capitalism's self-cancellation, Hobson's perspective of parasitism is not to be excluded. The reason that it is rather more of a remote possibility that world economy will function on simple parasitic lines than that it will freeze at a certain level of profit, and continue to exist by simple reproduction, is the fear that if colonial areas are built up to supply the imperial centre's needs, there will be a danger that the industrialized colonial areas cannot be kept in check, and will compete in such a fashion that extended reproduction will result, starting the process all over again. A necessary ingredient of stupidity, however, is not to be discounted either — after all the Romans even had vomitoriums.

Centrifugal tendencies to-day hinder imperialism from realizing capitalism's ideal limit, the achievement of simple reproduction. The U.S.A., with its preponderant economic strength, is the only logical candidate for the giant monopoly power which would reduce the rest of the world to colonial status. In trying to assert its position America can only push its 'junior partners' (England with its sterling bloc, France, Scandinavia, and the Benelux nations) so far. A delicate balance is established between what Russia can offer these nations or what might force them to congeal into a real union (i.e., as a third imperialist camp), and the pound of flesh 'Uncle

Shylock' would like to extract from them. The struggle between 'internationalism' and 'isolationism' inside the U.S.A., is precisely the division of opinion among the capitalist class as to how much of Europe and Asia to hold on to. Different estimates of how far the U.S. can extend itself without danger of collapse, is the pivot around which the internal struggle revolves. This internal friction creates the ground for a greater degree of manoeuvrability by opponents of U.S. imperialism.

Unlike continental colonial Europe, colonial areas like Burma, Israel, India, and Indonesia cannot be fully integrated into the world imperialist system because of their technological backwardness, political freshness, and limitations imposed by what is profitable for imperialism to control. As imperialism extends its destructive tendencies, more and more nations are hurled into national oppression, and the colonial peoples gain natural allies. A conscious utilization of this common plight is called for.

The resistance movements of the French and Poles, for example, against Hitler, and the present 'heresy' of *Titoism* against Stalinism, is evidence of the *national struggle* which has become the main force counter-acting imperialism to-day. The fact that imperial satraps break away also indicates the internal limits of capitalistic imperialism.

Terroristic action (assassination of politicians, sabotage and guerilla warfare), and slave revolts as in ancient Egypt are the only means of smashing barbarism behind the Iron Curtain and achieving a social revolution. Where bourgeois democracy functions, a new international democratic movement, by political intervention, may lead society to a higher level of social organization, thereby pulling humanity out of the quicksand of capitalistic self-destruction.

August 13th, 1949.

Lucky Coincidence?

The tin restrictionists are getting ready. At the next meeting of the Tin Study Group on March 20th they are almost certain to win their plea for a new international tin restriction scheme.

The Study Group is likely to be influenced chiefly by the rapid recovery in world tin production since the end of the war and by the fact that last year's estimated output of 160,000 tons exceeded consumption by about 40,000 tons.

(*Evening Standard*, London, January 27, 1950.)

Tavoy tin mines directors have received a cable stating that Communists have taken over all European mines in Tavoy, Burma, and have forced evacuation of European employees.

It is considered most unlikely that the mines can be worked again in the near future.

(*The Star*, London, January 27, 1950.)

Donald R. Pearce

THE DEGRADATION OF MAN

DURING the last five years or so, several articles and books have appeared dealing in whole or in part with 'the crisis in modern literature'. They have usually embodied explanations of this crisis — some quasi-religious in emphasis, some sociological, others historical. One of the most popular explains that man has been stripped of his dignity by modern science — or, to use the term favoured by holders of this view, *degraded* by science — and that the 'sickness' of modern literature is the direct result. The main argument is superficially striking. More expanded, it runs as follows: For four centuries human dignity has been under assault. The assault began with Copernicus who showed that man's home was not the centre of the universe but only a minor planet circling around the sun. John Locke carried the attack a stage further when he denied the existence of *innate ideas*, thus indicating that we come into this life without any sort of knowledge, natural or divine. Next, Charles Darwin did away with the idea of a 'special creation' and showed that man was just a casual evolutionary product. And now Freud has completed the picture by revealing that the human mind is not, as our fathers supposed, a rational instrument, but a menagerie of wild and ferocious beasts. The crisis in modern literature is a result of this completed process.¹

Few would wish to deny that there is a crisis in modern literature (in a certain important sense literature is always in a state of crisis) or that science has had something to do with it. What that crisis is and how it is related to science and to the 'dignity of man' are, however, questions which invite discussion. I should like therefore to reconsider some of the data upon which the argument summarized above is based.

First, the term 'the dignity of man'. Nowhere is it made entirely clear just what is meant by this phrase;² but one may infer that it means some generally held belief that man's relation to the universe and its purposes is important, even flattering; to alter a famous couplet, one might put it this way:

Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
Earth for whose use, says Dignity 'for mine'.

Degradation, on the other hand, is the post-Copernican discovery that man's relation to the universe is unflattering — perhaps incidental — and the consequent collapse, without replacement, of age-old values and value-

¹ The most succinct account of this argument is Mr. Carl Strauch's 'The Crisis in Modern Literature', *Twentieth Century English*, ed. Wm. S. Knickerbocker (The Philosophical Library, New York, 1946).

² Mr. Herschel Baker's *The Dignity of Man: Studies in the Persistence of an Idea* (Harvard University Press, 1947) in spite of its detailed tracing of the idea from ancient times up through the Renaissance, does not make the idea any clearer.

systems and the culture based upon them: scientific truth, so far from having made us free, has swept away our home together with our prison, our wisdom together with our ignorance, and has turned us into a race of diminutive Yahoos lost in a wilderness of broken faiths. Man is no longer the measure of all things, but the measured. We see what we are and our dignity is appalled.

Copernicus, Locke, Darwin, and Freud are the villains of the piece. One senses, perhaps, something arbitrary in this casting. Might there not, perhaps, have been a reference to Marx, on the grounds that his economic doctrines tend to reduce men to the status of pawns pushed about by great impersonal hands; or to the fall of the Roman Empire seeing that that event shattered the confidence of mediæval man in all temporal institutions and, by implication, in human life and effort? But it is not with hypothetical omissions from the argument that I wish to deal, but with the argument as it stands and with the general conception of the dignity of man.

The notion that human dignity has somehow suffered degradation, and the related notion that there was once a time when this was not the case, is not a new one to the historian of ideas. It is woven into world literature and philosophy. Every age, deploring its own lot, has looked back with jealous admiration to better, happier times. Broadly speaking, this is the mood and attitude of the Pastoral. Face the other way, view the future in that blessed light (inverted pastoral) and you have Utopianism. But whether it looks to past or to future times the Pastoral implies a depreciation of the present — for it is only by postulating an unsatisfactory *Now* that either *Then* or *When* can, by contrast, become glorious and desirable to the imagination. As long as the Pastoral works with symbols only (Fairy Tale, Romance, Myth) all is well and good; but when, as in the present case, to stretch the term 'Pastoral' a little, it becomes a critically documented thesis, one may inspect the supporting evidence.

The argument I am opposing confines itself to the degradation of man since Copernicus. One cannot help wondering how human dignity fared prior to 1543. We are invited to believe that it fared very much better indeed. But I am made uneasy by such contrary evidence as the cynical and evidently ubiquitous mediæval doctrine of 'Fortune's Wheel', by which all beneath the moon was held to be irrational, unstable, mercilessly fickle; the associated 'philosophy' of *contemptus mundi*; the grimmer side of the monastic discipline with its emphasis upon human baseness; the (in the present sense) 'degrading' Christian dogma of original sin; Stoicism with its bitterly sophisticated smile at both heavenly and worldly affairs; Greek fatalism with its sharp sense of the tragic inexorability of hidden laws and decrees by which both gods and men were broken.

It might be said that ancient and mediæval pessimism did not affect the dignity of man; for although man may have from time to time held a low opinion of himself, he still saw himself as a special creation, planted at the centre of the universe, his breast in the theatre of creation's greatest drama. We are told that it was not until Copernican displaced Ptolemaic astronomy that the dignity of man together with that of his planet was seriously shaken.

But what was the eschatological significance of Ptolemaic astronomy? Briefly, it was this: not that the earth was the divinely appointed centre of the universe and hence the appropriate home of the darling of creation, but,

on the contrary, that as the earth was the central point in the whole system it was therefore the lowest point, *and hence the sphere of the basest substances*, and the right place, in fact, for a being as degraded as man. It was, of course, for this reason that in his *Divine Comedy* Dante made it his whole spiritual aim to rise far, in fact infinitely, above the mere earthly — the condition of grossness, violence and sin — and, having ascended through all the spheres, disappear at last in the final vision of God. A good Ptolemaist he therefore placed Satan and the worst sinners in Hell's deepest pit which was at the centre of the earth, lower than which it was impossible to descend in the system.

Human dignity evidently looked sorer to pre-Copernicans than we might suppose. Actually, when Copernicus's astronomy displaced Ptolemy's it was less human dignity than human conservatism, or authoritarianism, that was outraged; for it meant that the whole structure of mediæval theology and philosophy, a labour of ages, would have to be rebuilt because of a mechanical fault at the foundations. This threatened to upset and discredit the integral organization of the whole Christian Church, and the resistance by, let us say, the 'vested interests', to the theory of the witty Pole (who was an ecclesiastic, by the way) appears perfectly natural and understandable.

Locke's denial of *innate ideas* is said to have shown that 'man did not, evidently, come into this life perfectly and beautifully equipped with ideas of God, immortality and the like'.³ In point of fact it had a quite different effect. His denial of innate ideas was not simply an attack on the rather glamorous doctrine of Platonic 'Reminiscence' (which was always caviare to the general anyway) but more significantly a denial of that doctrine's dark twin-brother, hereditary sin (a much more public doctrine). To put it very crudely, man did not, if Locke was right, begin life with two strikes on him, but with a clean sheet (*tabula rasa*); he began life neutral and unformed and ended by being the sum, or product, of impressions and experiences which came to him from without. One may see at a glance how, with slight changes, this doctrine fed into those of the natural goodness of man, Rousseauism, Democracy and especially, Perfectibility; refine the environment and you refine the individual; man was, in fact, theoretically perfectible. So far from degrading man, one of the chief effects of Locke's doctrine was to encourage man to see himself as starting life on an equal footing not with the fallen angels but with 'those who stood firm', born sinless, and though corrupted by his environment, knowing that the corrupting causes were at least humanly remediable. In fact, Locke lies squarely at the bottom of all rational, liberal democratic theory.

The Darwinian degradation is a similar pastoral sophistry. Scholastic philosophy had long taught that all existing forms made up a Scale of Being in which man occupied the middle position: man was, that is to say, simultaneously the top of the animal (or natural) part of the scale and the bottom of the spiritual. Though Darwin took away from this idea with one hand, he gave back with the other. He broke the philosophic *rationale* of the lower half of the great scale by showing that the principle governing rank within it was not metaphysical but physical ('struggle for existence', 'survival of the fittest') and not ontological but phylogenic ('descent' and

³ Carl F. Strauch, 'The Crisis in Modern Literature', *op. cit.*

relationship). But he demonstrated with a finality unknown to Scholasticism the precise graduation of the various species, and established with overwhelming evidence man's position at the top of the evolutionary scale. He taught us to see Man as 'the latest life-thrust', life-become-human, the most specialized development in a process unreckonably old.⁴ Nor did Darwin cancel out the idea of a divine Creation. He simply pushed back the date of a general creation a few ages: 'There is grandeur', he wrote, 'in this view of life with its several powers having been originally breathed by the creator into a few forms, or into one, and that . . . from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been and are being evolved'.⁵ And as far as a 'special creation' is concerned, one may observe that the special mutation which produced Man is no less miraculous because it is called a 'mutation', which is only a term used to refer to a process unaccounted for by Science. But, to add to the Darwinian picture, man is not merely unique among the forms of life on this planet; according to Eddington there is plenty of reason to think that we are the only thing of the kind existing in the entire range of Einstein's mammoth universe.⁶ A more flattering uniqueness it would be hard to imagine. Ptolemy's 'centre' was a naïve boast.

As to Freud, we are told that with his 'magic wand he transformed the brain into a menagerie of wild and ferocious beasts . . . the abiding place of horror and madness'.⁷ One is probably not expected to take this comment altogether seriously; from a like-spirited reading of *Lear* or *Macbeth* a person might bring himself to believe that Shakespeare saw the human mind as an even more frightful creation than Freud did. But Freud seems rather to have done just the opposite of this. Man has always known about the beast-and-demon-filled inner jungle and it has always been a terror to him. Freud did not 'transform the brain into a menagerie'; instead, like Adam, he gave the animals names (rich in symbol, image, metaphor, myth), found out their habits, and allayed some of the mediæval terrors they inspired. He has in fact deepened and extended the meaning of the word 'human'. But, more than that, what Freud showed, almost single-handed, was that the *microcosm* is more various, intricate and dynamic than the gigantic (and largely empty) *macrocosm* of modern astro-physics, and in so doing he returned man to the centre of the stage. And with regard to the more clinical aspects of Freudianism, whoever has his dignity hurt by knowing that he is not an angel but a human being whose psychological processes are deeply rooted in the dark mother-soil of general nature, needs to have his dignity hurt, for it is not dignity, but ignorance, or egoism. Dignity which is genuine is also tough and enduring, and learning the truth about ourselves cannot degrade it. We may have soberer eyes than the pre-Copernicans, but that is all to the good — they are clearer. Man is not dignified by corporate illusion, but by an awareness of his real uniqueness; and that is only possible by an awareness of his real aloneness; and, in fact, as the gorgeous, multicoloured back-

⁴ On this whole point see Julian Huxley's brilliant essay 'The Uniqueness of Man' in his *Man and the Modern World* (Mentor Books, 1948).

⁵ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of the Species* (New York, 1896), Chap. XV.

⁶ See Arthur S. Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York, 1929), Chap. VIII, esp. pp. 177-78.

⁷ Carl Strauch, *op. cit.*

drop of mediæval cosmology and philosophy has been gradually wheeled away, the dignity of man has become more and not less apparent: he is alone on a barer stage, a new set of lines to learn, and a new school of acting to master. And the fact that both stage and actor will at some date, inconceivably remote, come tumbling down and 'be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins' is fundamentally incomprehensible and meaningless, for the same reason that though we are all post-Copernicans we are all Ptolemaic at heart.

It is remarkable that though Degradationists like to speak of a general crisis in modern literature (modern literature is dismissed in this way: 'one half . . . expresses the dismal zero of the degradation of man, and the other half . . . is mere journalism or pamphleteering . . .') they confine themselves to one segment only of that literature, that is to the *novel*; and of that segment they normally deal with but one aspect, the naturalistic novel, in which they see evidently little more than 'hysteria, perversity, self-torture and sterility under the baleful influence of a philosophy that has transformed us into Yahoos'.⁸ But if one does not see anything but malignant and irresponsible cynicism in the work of the naturalists, if one does not see any positive philosophy there, if, to take a case, one does not see that in *A Farewell to Arms* it is the degradation of war and not the degradation of man that emerges, I can only say, quite bluntly, that he must be guilty of misreading.

Degradationists like to apply the adjectives 'barbarous' and 'unlearned' to modern American fiction.¹⁰ Here is an example of the arguments behind the charge: 'The limitation of the modern American novel', is that 'it has no learned tradition, no all-embracing philosophy of life, and it has no body of critical theory'.¹¹ The Renaissance, the Eighteenth Century, the Romantic period, are put into evidence. The writers of the Renaissance 'studied'; and 'from their studies they arrived at such virtues as: Fortitude, Temperance, Prudence, Justice, Liberality, and Courtesy'.¹² The Eighteenth Century writers 'studied nature, and nature to them meant the ancients'.¹³ 'The man who aspired to compete with Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Keats realized that he must be a man of learning'.¹⁴ This is not a very fruitful line of argument. We are probably not less erudite than the old masters; and it is likely that we know a good deal more than some of them, if only because we are later in time. But that is not the real point. We differ from them not in knowing less but in knowing *differently*. More than a little of what they knew is, in certain obvious respects, no longer relevant, because much of the old tradition, together with much of the old Order that sustained it, has gone and cannot be restored. Nor is it important or desirable

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.* Notice that Mr. Strauch is not only submitting single-case proof of a (defective) general proposition but the case submitted is, itself, quite misrepresented.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Mr. Sophus K. Winther's 'The Sick American Novel' (which revoices charges made in Howard Mumford Jones' 'Nobility Wanted'), *The Pacific Spectator* (Winter, 1947), pp. 105-112.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

that it should be restored; what is important is that we be *made to see* in what respect and to what extent it has gone, and to accept that, and to accept, too, the responsibility of that knowledge; and that is what the modern novel of social criticism, insofar as it has a unifying aim of that sort, is doing — making us see what it is essential that we see in the social and cultural landscape of our time.

The view that the naturalistic novel is lacking in a 'learned tradition, an all-embracing philosophy of life' brings up, of course, the whole question of the status and character of modern philosophical naturalism upon which the naturalistic novel is ultimately based, an examination which cannot be carried out here. This question has been amply taken care of, however, in the symposium *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*,¹⁵ where it plainly emerges that modern naturalists so far from representing 'a savage zero in philosophy' (Mr. Strauch's phrase) or being unlearned or traditionless, have, on the other hand, a distinguished philosophical tradition and are far from silent upon the principal issues of our time or the abiding values of all times. Literary naturalism ought not, in fact, to be severed from philosophical naturalism in which it has its roots: we have learned not to do this in the case of the Romantics or the Eighteenth Century writers. Because he is based, consciously or unconsciously, in a sound philosophical tradition, the literary naturalist is neither irresponsible cynic nor muck-raker; he is a man doing his share in the serious job of understanding and sorting out the modern world.

The crisis in modern literature is not, I think, to be accounted for by any formula of Degradation. It is rather — because literature that is any good is rooted in life — a part of the general crisis of our time, which is a social, political and economic crisis, characteristic of a society in process of profound change. Once the very strict passage from the past to a future social order — in which freedom will be general and not relative and uncertain, and in which communities will be integrated, not divided — is achieved, we may expect a literature of power instead of anxiety; and until such a society is made — a rational democracy, in extent presumably worldwide — we will, unless I am badly mistaken, continue to read and write the literature of crisis. But that is from my subject, which has been to attack a faulty argument, or rather attitude, not to propose another.

¹⁵ *Naturalism and the Human Spirit*, ed. Y. H. Krikorian (Cal. Univ. Press, New York, 1944).

Suspended Sentence

Prague, Monday.—*Rude Pravo*, organ of the Czech Communist Party, demanded the dismissal of a provincial newspaper editor because he wrote 'Democracy means the rule of the people'.

(*Daily Herald*, London, November 29th, 1949.)

Alec Brown

THE RUSSIAN AND YUGOSLAV REVOLUTIONS

The editors of *Contemporary Issues* wish to note that the following article is presented as an expression of responsible opinion in the process of initiating discussion on the question of Russia and the Eastern European countries. Our own point of view will be presented subsequently. Comments, criticisms and articles from readers expressing alternative views or supplementing those stated will, of course, be welcomed.

IN two European countries a communist-led revolution has been accomplished. In each case the people developed a revolutionary socialist party guided by Marxist thought, and this 'led' the nation through revolution to the establishment of a social system with power in the ultimate control of that party.

Help from outside, in the years of preparation and the actual days of the revolution, though important, was in each case so limited as to be negligible. The British working-class 'Hands off Russia' action of 1920 was largely instrumental in foiling Mr. Churchill's attempt to trick Britain into crushing the revolution by bayonets, and saved the Russian revolution from almost inevitable defeat by outside powers. Yugoslavia also enjoyed indirect outside aid, inasmuch as the whole complex democratic struggle against fascism and nazism (though intermixed with the struggle of a rival imperialism against these forces) was support for the Yugoslav communists, who have never imagined that they struggled alone, but follow every democratic manifestation in the world with true international sympathy.

Direct aid in both the Russian and Yugoslav revolutions was limited to the local participation of visiting socialists from other countries. This form of aid, though consisting of grains of mustard seed, and always unspectacular, is yet indispensable to humanity, for from such individual seeds will eventually spring a full healthy growth of genuine international co-operation, co-operation of internationally-minded peoples rather than self-seeking States.

What is important, however, is that neither in Russia nor Yugoslavia was the revolution bayonetted into the country by alien pitchforkers, as in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria. (Albania is a rather special case which we will not take up here.) Both the Russian and Yugoslav revolutions were essentially autochthonous. The parties achieving

these revolutions sought inspiration in Marxist philosophy and method. Here, however, all resemblance ends, although all manner of men continue to chatter as if the Yugoslav and Russian communist ideologies were identical. A genuine Marxist, even without reference to the facts, could not even expect anything so unorganic as identity of two live communist parties ever to have taken place. Such cloudy and unrealistic thought and ostruthian refusal to observe is perhaps excusable in those who have not graduated through the Marxist schools. But yet it must remain a cause for marvel that so many self-styled Marxists can in 1949 be so addicted to what Marx would have called *fetishism*. The fact that Russians and Yugoslavs alike use the same Marxist technical dictionary is no reason for assuming that they have ever said or meant exactly the same thing, let alone that they are doing the same thing — any more than the use of a common international scientific language justifies the conclusion that the Soviet biologist Lysenko and the British biologist Huxley see eye to eye on heredity.

Let the ground be made quite clear by stating that it is here understood to be fundamental to a Marxist approach, and to be that quality of Marxist thought which justifies comparison with a true scientific approach, to *expect* development in any field to result from the factors present in that field. For it stands to reason, it is axiomatic, that if an ideology has been vitally enough connected, in all its implications, with the organic life of any nation to transform its social structure, it must have deep roots in the community and in the past history of that community. All countries are different growths — otherwise, indeed, they would not be different countries. This too is surely axiomatic. Yet it is so frequently ignored that one does well to repeat it. And when the geographical, economic, historical, topographic, and various spiritual factors in two countries differ, not a little, but greatly, one from the other, one expects them in each country to fuse separately into developments, not merely divergent, but markedly so. A wise man (and after all, a Marxist is, among other things, a man trying to be more wise than others) does not expect the people of Yugoslavia to react in the same way or to evolve the same forms of approach to socialism as the people of Russia.

In this paper we shall confine ourselves to features which stand out in harsh outline, and hope to provide a series of suggestions for study and discussion rather than a balanced analysis. Reasons of space prohibit full comparisons of the Russian and Yugoslav revolutions and compel bold generalization and bold assertion. Let us therefore, accommodating ourselves in one respect to the habits of our political men of Gotham, flit from one subject to another, and leave full analysis to a later book. Our first stage must be that of learning to observe, and that is the purpose of this paper.

First: the vital, immediate motive-force producing the revolution.

Among the essentials for a revolution, there must be the will of the people to overthrow the old order. In Russia, the peasantry provided the motive force. Had the peasant-soldiers not downed weapons, there would have been no Russian revolution. The Emancipation of 1861 had largely saddled the peasantry with land, without the capital either to pay for it, or to develop it properly. Since considerable State, Church, and privately-owned complexes of land remained, it was a feature of the Russian peasant outlook, individual by individual, to see the solution of their difficulties in the acquisition of

still more land. The 1914-17 war against the Central European powers did not rally their support. They were not interested. As the contagious refusal to go on fighting took Russia out of the war and contributed to bringing down the regime, the basic peasant thirst for more land was supercharged by the prospect of at last grabbing both more land and farm stock. The motive force of the Russian revolution was thus a widespread national urge to get out of a war mingled with a desire to acquire land.

In Yugoslavia also, the peasantry, three-quarters of the population, provided the motive force of revolution. But beyond this basic, abstract observation, the comparison turns into contrast. For *their* immediate aim was to *get into the war*. Yugoslavia, of its own popular volition, came into the war when the country was surrounded by the enemy, and Poland, Norway, France, Belgium and Holland had already been conquered! To the Yugoslav people the war against the Axis, by which they meant Germany and Italy, was one of liberation of *their land* from invaders and those who supported the invaders.

They aimed, not to acquire land, but, by removing the assistants of the invaders, to remove a corrupt and effete ruling class. For in the main the Yugoslav land had already been acquired or inherited by the peasantry. They wished to remove the old rulers, because those old rulers failed to develop Yugoslav resources and suppressed those who desired to do so properly. In the pre-war years there was a steady growth in the number of university graduates of peasant origin, and also a significant switch-over from the study of law and 'philosophy' (in the continental university examination sense), to that of engineering, medicine and veterinary work. These developments were very significant, for they were definitely not a response to any concrete demand for constructively educated men and women made by the effete ruling class, but on the contrary, resulted from the urge of a peasantry which *felt* it owned its homeland by right, and wanted to equip itself to develop that land. In other words, in the pre-war years, there was developing a national Yugoslav brain, which understood clearly that a country the size of Great Britain, with the population which Great Britain had at the time of the first Great Exhibition (1852), with ample power resources, ample labour-force, and a wide range of important raw materials, suitable for modern technological development, above all needed home industry.

Second: the immediate policy incumbent on the young revolutionary governments of Russia and Yugoslavia, and the relation of that policy to popular aspirations.

The Russian bolshevik party used the peasant aspirations as a main revolutionary force, but on seizing power, at once found itself obliged to go against those aspirations. For solution of the Russian food problem required not what the peasantry wanted, peasant ownership, but agricultural improvement. Against this the preceding history of Russia had trained the peasantry to fight. In Russia it had been not the peasants, but the landowners who dreamed of new agricultural techniques; in Yugoslavia it was the peasantry, not the ruling class, who thus dreamed. The bolshevik party therefore found itself obliged to impose a very unpopular line of development. This was so unpopular that in the end the Soviet Government resorted to exaggeratedly

authoritarian and centralized methods of dragooning the peasantry.

The Yugoslav party, on the other hand, in its present stage, finds no conflict between its own aspirations and those of the generality of the people.

Third: the nature of the body of men carrying the revolution through in the two countries.

In Russia the active leadership was for long exclusively that of a tightly-disciplined, strictly limited revolutionary party. In Yugoslavia, though that inner party of course has existed and still exists, it did not achieve the revolution alone. During the war of liberation, which grew organically into the revolution, there developed a much broader force — the people's liberation movement, popularly called abroad the 'partisan movement'. It is a startling fact that, at the close of hostilities, the Yugoslav liberation army numbered three-quarters of a million active fighters, based on a home front of tens of thousands of homes, all most consciously, and with unanimity unparalleled in recent history, imbued with the two aims: liberation from external and internal enemies *and* national development on mutual co-operation lines.

In the earlier stages of the revolution, the Russian party developed no such broad organized body. In Yugoslavia the liberation army and its home supporters grew, as the war ended, into the People's Front (*narodni front* — the word *narodni* in Yugoslav connotes both *national* and *people's*). There was no comparable *narodni* movement in Russia, though the word *narodni* also exists in Russian: in such contexts the word *nacionalny*, with narrower connotation, is largely used. (Indeed, in Russia *narodny* was at the time of the Russian revolution associated with a political movement largely inspired by what the peasantry, as we relate above, actually wanted — the land).

If we put the effective Russian party at the time of the Revolution at 250,000 (which is a generous exaggeration) that is only about *one in six hundred* or .16 per cent. of the population. If we leave out the home front background of the Yugoslav People's Army, and count only the army itself, we still get twenty of the population, or 5 per cent.! But if we count, quite reasonably, that for every fighter there were at least four home supporters, the proportion of active makers of the Yugoslav Revolution is as high as *one in four* of the population (including infants among the four!). That is 25 per cent. against .16 per cent.! 25 per cent. to carry through a popular policy; .16 per cent. to carry through an unpopular policy. What a contrast! (The Yugoslavs claim that this People's Front numbers 7,000,000, *nearly one in two of the population*!)

Fourth: comparison by geographical size.

The area of Yugoslavia is approximately that of Great Britain, just under 100,000 square miles. The area of the Soviet Union is just over 1,500,000 square miles — more than fifteen times as large. Yet the density of the population of Yugoslavia is about three times that of the Soviet Union in 1917. Here is another far from unimportant factor making for a contrast between the two revolutions. One country was small, compact, and many citizens had personal knowledge of other parts; the other was widely scattered, and few people had general knowledge of other parts. It is

incomparably easier for a Yugoslav to conceive of the physical reality of the whole of his country, than for a Russian to do so. The Russian inevitably feels a sense of limitless, ill-defined space.

Fifth: the outlook of the bourgeoisie in the two countries at the time of the revolution.

This comparison links up with that of size, for though before the revolution both the Russian and the Yugoslav States were in a semi-colonial position with regard to economically more highly developed countries, the Russian bourgeoisie nevertheless dreamed of independent capitalist development, and desired change, thereby largely contributing to the revolution, while the Yugoslav bourgeoisie was entirely satisfied with the rôle of agents of imperialist capital, and in no way desired change, which thus became exclusively the function of the broad body of the Yugoslav people. (See also comparison 7.)

Sixth: the 'racial' factor.

Though, in addition to Serbs, Montenegrins, Bosnians and Croats, all speaking the same language, and Slovenes and Macedonians, speaking closely allied languages, Yugoslavia included a variety of minorities (Albanians, Hungarians, Italians, Germans, Slovaks, Ruthenes, Gypsies and Rumanians), these minorities were scattered among the Slav-speaking population (Slovaks and Ruthenes of course also speaking Slav tongues). None of the minorities within the Yugoslav frontiers constituted a separate people in the full sense of the word, that is to say, with aspirations to national independence. They without exception conceived of themselves either as inhabitants of their native land, without other allegiance, or else may have been attracted to some national nucleus *outside* the Yugoslav frontiers. The Gypsies have for long been conscious of themselves as a separate people, but that has been as a separate people transcending frontiers by ignoring them. The remainder have merely known of countries to which they could belong outside the frontiers of Yugoslavia.

Not so with Russia, where we find not much more than half are Russians, with closely allied Ukrainians and Belorussians, making a Slav-speaking group of about three-quarters of the population. The remaining quarter in the Soviet Union is made up of a great variety of peoples and nations, (about 40 altogether) of most varying speeches and with most varied past. Many of these have known their own national States, now absorbed within the area of the present Soviet Union. Others naturally aspire to their own States, since they are the only people of their kind in the world.

It is open to any member of a Yugoslav minority, if dissatisfied, except for the Gypsies, or the few Ruthenes, to emigrate to a country of his 'own' kind, and his own language. But the only prospect open to millions in the Soviet Union if they wish to live in a State of their own kind, is that of again liberating their countries from the Russian yoke.

In Yugoslavia, therefore, the nationality problem as the Soviet Union knows it never existed. The Yugoslav nationality problem was that mainly of reconciling the Croats and Serbs, identical peoples with identical speech, yet distinguished by the former national State of the Serbs being of the Eastern Christian rite, while the former national State of the Croats (terminated

1,000 years ago) was Catholic; and in reality this boiled down to a conflict between the rival Serb and Croat groups for hegemony within Yugoslavia.

In the Russian field there is a vast and complex centrifugal or disintegratory force, derived from a natural longing of many a people and nation for life independent of Russian tutelage. In Yugoslavia the solution has been mainly the realization of non-religious balance between Serb and Croat, with egalitarian co-operation between all 'races'. In the Soviet Union the solution which has been adopted consists of rigid centralized rule and the elimination of egalitarian tendencies between peoples and nations. Equality among the Yugoslav peoples and equal rights for minorities binds the country together; equality among the Soviet peoples would have the opposite effect.

Thus, whatever the theory about nationalities now ascribed to Stalin (though originally drafted by Bukharin), the actual human application, (practice distinct from the embryo scheme of a first theorization), cannot but differ fundamentally in the two countries, even if both adopt the same formulation. Thus, though Belgrade has seemed to copy the Soviet constitution in this respect, the Yugoslav reality is completely the reverse of the Russian.

Seventh: the economic aspect of the nationalities question and its social results.

Here the two countries are completely antipodal. For whereas Russia has become a country by some centuries of territorial expansion, at the expense of other peoples and nations, Yugoslavia is a country which was blotted out and frustrated for hundreds of years by the territorial expansion of others, and which has therefore been shaped spiritually by an endless struggle to throw off an alien yoke and achieve a national state limited to demographic frontiers.

Here we have space to point out only a few points of distinction. The first embryo Russian State was for a period in the Middle Ages economically subservient to the Tartars. Liberation however took no burden from the people; it merely transferred payment of primitive taxation from a Tartar to a Russian princely caste.

Half of the Yugoslavs were for centuries subject to the Ottoman Empire, the other half were subject to German and Hungarian feudal lords. The initial stage of Yugoslav liberation, that of the emancipation of the Belgrade *pashalik*, by which the rise of nationalities in the nineteenth century was inaugurated, was accompanied by transfer of the land from the Sultan to the people. Since the Great Powers were busy at the time with the Napoleonic Wars, they did not, in this rare instance, intervene to produce a 'settlement' by which indemnity would certainly have been paid to the Turks, through an international loan. Subsequent transfer of territory from Sultan to Serbia did indeed bring such millstones, but — it is an important *but* — one powerful centre was established, the Serbian *Shumadia*, in which the people started out in XIXth Century liberty, knowing no over-all overlordship, in whatever economic form. They hence identified alien occupation completely with exploitation, and *vice-versa*.¹ Thus Belgrade and the Serbian

¹ The bearing of this on the heroic Yugoslav act of challenging powerful invaders in 1914 and 1941 is obvious.

home counties are perhaps the sole area of Europe with, in this respect, a fairly recent clean slate-board; with, that is to say, a very live sense of what national independence should mean. Not for nothing, as we have remarked above, the Yugoslavs use the term *narodni* for their national movement, both to mean 'national' and also, consciously, in the sense of 'of the people'.

At the same time, in the other half of the country, under Hapsburg rule, important groups of Yugoslavs were established as freemen, to serve as independent frontier-guarding population. Thereby another libertarian seed-bed, closely linked with the Belgrade *pashalik*, was established, for the profit of posterity and eventually humanity at large.

Eighth: the distinction between what the revolution was to develop in the two countries — a distinction connected with the preceding.

The revolution in each country released the forces, hitherto frustrated, which were to achieve the development of the country. But in Russia, the Tsarist regime had consistently cut off its own nose, to spite its face. Acquiring new territory with valuable minerals, which Russia proper lacked, the Tsarist regime consistently hindered their exploitation. Russia proper, from the point of view of modern industrial development, is a comparatively poor country, so it is not surprising that Russian revolutionaries, while proclaiming the rights of all peoples to self-determination, contrived to limit realization of that ideal wherever a subordinate territory contained desirable minerals. In particular, the Ukraine and the economically and strategically valuable Caucasus were at all costs to be kept Russian territories. This inevitably resulted in a process of socialist exploitation of non-Russian peoples and territories which, though watered by the Kremlin nurserymen with the most lofty of ideals, led relentlessly and sadly to a new Frankenstein — an imperialist form of socialism and communism.

The Yugoslavs, on the other hand, had lived for many centuries in a country unprecedentedly rich in natural resources. With an anti-imperialist tradition in the purely political sense, they have therefore also been under no expansionist temptations whatsoever in the economic sense. There is nothing to make their communism take on fantastic imperialist tasks; everything to make it more and more intransigently self-sufficient. To be cynical for them imperialism is not worth the candle.

Ninth: a religious contrast.

Though to-day men cease to believe in or support organized churches, they are nevertheless the children of their ecclesiastical past; moreover, they continue to-day to live a spiritual life. Now, the Eastern Church of Russia early became in Byzantine fashion an instrument of the ruler. Religious ideology became synonymous with submission to authority. The Eastern Church of Yugoslavia, however, made itself autocephalous two centuries before the English Tudors did the same for the Anglican Church. And whereas in the mediæval period the ephemeral Bulgarian rulers strove, *à la russe*, to imitate Byzantium, building a State Church supposedly more powerful by being centred on a specially built and grandiose capital city, the Serbs created a peculiarly de-centralized Church, by policy building their monasteries and churches away from the towns, as close to nature and

ordinary people as possible. So, although the Serbian Church was turned into an instrument of State power, this was done in a peculiar way. And scarcely a century had elapsed before the Turkish conquest made that Church a main instrument of the popular aspirations for liberty, political and economic. Thus the ideology of the Serb Orthodox Church became as libertarian as that of Russia was authoritarian. Here is the explanation of the Serb Patriarch Gavriilo marching at the head of the crowds on March 27th, 1941, when the then Yugoslav Government was ejected by a popular uprising because it had submitted to and 'joined' the Axis.

Further, we observe this fundamental protestant spirit manifesting itself in another form. It has been endemic in the Yugoslav lands. Not only was the Bogomil movement, in its popular aspects, a mainspring in the establishment of the Serb Orthodox Church (into the history of which we cannot enter here): it also inspired the passage of Bosnia to Islam in the fifteenth century. For at the time, Turkish Islam, in its earlier, more tolerant, form, seemed to the Bosnians, menaced by Catholicism, a possible liberating force, and this bequeathed to Bosnia a peculiarly tough form of protestant spirit. Hence the key rôle of Bosnia in the Liberation war, for if the first active step was that of Belgrade on March 27th, 1941, the first great field of Yugoslav anti-Axis warfare was Bosnia, a few weeks later.

Finally, we must observe that not only is Russian orthodoxy essentially authoritarian, but this has resulted in protesting sects in Russia remaining small, fragmentary and peculiar, eccentric groups. In Yugoslavia the balance between eastern and western Christianity on the one hand, and Christianity and Islam on the other, with very ancient Jewish communities (Sephardic, Ashkenazi, and others dating to pre-Slav times) has produced a degree of religious toleration (and here we speak of the people, not of ruling cliques) far greater than that of Britain. In mixed Yugoslav villages, in pre-revolutionary days, it was not uncommon for a family to have a burial or christening performed by a priest of the other church, if one's 'own' priest was ill. Can one in England imagine a Baptist calling in a Church of England priest for such a reason? (It is quite another matter when Wesleyans with no graveyard of their own bury their dead in the Anglican graveyard.)

The result of these differing traditions is that in Russia it is socially rather daring and shocking, quite apart from the crude political implications, to be a heretic, which is one explanation of the ovine way the Russian people submit to authoritarian rule. In Yugoslavia, on the other hand, it is socially shocking to be a yes-man, and even such a critic of the régime as Mr. Crankshaw wrote from Belgrade (*Observer*, September 29th, 1949), 'they are a race of arrogant individualists whose passion for identifying themselves with their country is their only visible flight outside themselves'. In the same dispatch we read 'just as nowhere in Belgrade does one glimpse that open-armed enthusiasm for an abstract future which, even after all these years, keeps breaking through among the Russian young, so nowhere is there the slightest sign of that obverse of Russian enthusiasm — the exhausted lapse into total apathy — and the consequent transformation of individuals into automata'. For the Russian, bred in orthodoxy and spiritual subservience, unorthodoxy and spiritual freedom *have* to remain but dreams,

and the inevitable return to reality is of course always devastating to the spirit. For the Yugoslav, bred in protestantism and spiritual adventure, dreams are less necessary and reality consequently far less terrifying. Put in another way, the Russian dreams his dreams; the Yugoslav tends to *live* his.

Tenth: the views of those making the revolution.

Despite Lenin's perhaps rather puritanical, yet basically very sound and human views on sex, the leadership of the Russian Revolution was closely connected with the view that love should be 'free'. We need not waste space on the absurdity of this notion, (for it is absurd, not merely socially, but also individually; love is one of the most powerful enslaving forces). What we should observe is that with the Russian Revolution went a great number of similar wild notions. Good Russian communists liked futurist literary forms, futurist painting in various forms, and in music composers like Tschaikovski were *vieux jeu*. This was natural, because Tsarism had supported all forms of conformity to established values.

In Yugoslavia, the opposite was the case. For the young men and women who made the Yugoslav revolution were (and are) in strong reaction against the social and cultural tastes of the old rulers of Yugoslavia. For though in no way puritanical or strait-laced, the Yugoslavs are intelligently opposed to libertinage. (Their approach to sex perhaps resembles that of the Swedish nation.) Similarly, in the arts, their reaction is against exaggerated individualist experimentation. We shall not try here to examine to what extent this is due to a feeling that at the present juncture the arts have had sufficient experimentation, to what extent it is due to a natural tendency to keep art with a mass consuming public easily comprehensible, or to what extent this is merely a return to the main current of Yugoslav thought. What we have to notice is the fundamental contrast between the Russian and the Yugoslav approach to important moral issues, and cultural manifestations of those issues.

Eleventh: attitudes towards Western Europe.

Russia, in its intellectual circles at least, was torn throughout the nineteenth century between Slavophiles and Westernizers. The Slavophiles held that Russian culture was superior to that of Europe; Peter the Great had been wrong to make boyars shave off their beards, and wrong, say, to build Petersburg. The Westernizers, on the other hand, thought everything of the barber and his aims. Having evolved two such powerful and antipodal groups, it was clear either that Russia for a long time would oscillate violently between two extremes, or else that one view was organic, the other (the Western) a mere spasmodic reaction. The Revolution was at first a great Westernizing movement. The first leaders of the bolshevik Party, moreover, were men educated in the West. Apart from that, Russian literature was the work of men with Western education, who evolved a Russian prose style based on French, German, and English prose style. They shaped their thoughts in Western languages, with their logical time precision, based on well elaborated systems of verbs, and then re-cast them, as it were, in their Russian speech with its defective, almost non-existent, verb system (or

at least, almost non-existent as an instrument of *objective* thought).² Lenin wrote Russian as Leo Tolstoy wrote it.

With the passage of time, however, Russia came to be ruled by men who knew absolutely nothing of the Western world, for even those who travel abroad to-day never move beyond the confines of Russia. Let us not forget that life in a Soviet Embassy, with brief excursions to conference rooms, is not life abroad. Russian diplomats as well as statesmen are safe in their own orthodoxy, because they know absolutely nothing of the West; their conception of the West is limited to their own dream-conceptions. Now in the oscillation between Westernizers and Slavophiles or Stalinists, the swing is definitely not periodic, or balanced. The Westernizing swing began late, and developed spasmodically. The Russian tendency is to remain basically Slavophil, meaning really Russophil, or Russian Isolationist — the other Slavs being awarded approbation only in so far as they become Russian.

With Yugoslavia, on the other hand, we step into a different world. For though, for perverse romantic reasons, many excursionist journalists refer to the 'Eastern' character of Belgrade or the Serbs, there is in reality no such Eastern pull. Never was the past eradicated more rapidly and thoroughly than the Turkish form of orientalism, for centuries dominant in Belgrade. Once a city of mosques, there has for very long been only one tiny token mosque in Belgrade. (Perhaps observers are deceived by the partly oriental kitchen of Belgrade. But on such grounds, Vienna too is the East, for the elaborate cakes made of nuts and cream originate not from European chefs, but from the Islamic East.) And if it is a question of Byzantinism, one must point out that paradoxically enough the 'Western' Croats are more Byzantine in spirit, through their earlier Viennese overlay, than the Serbs with their unrelenting passion for Western clear thinking and all that goes with it. The fact is that through and through the Yugoslavs are, generally speaking, *all* astonishingly tough and persistent *Westernizers*; they certainly never have been 'Slavophiles'.

Let us note a few points. When the Yugoslavs invented the Cyrillic (Glagolithic) and then the newer, modern Cyrillic alphabet (tenth century) and eventually gave the Russians their letters, and even aided them to draft their first codes of law, this was done in *agreement with the Pope of Rome*, who financed the initial venture! When the Yugoslavs stood against Ottoman invasions at Kossovo (fourteenth century) they did not do so as a remote people, like the Muscovites against the Tartars, but essentially as part of Christendom, and after news of the battle, (false, alas) reached Western Europe, the church bells were rung everywhere, for the victory of the south-eastern fringe of Christendom and Islam.

When printing was invented, Russia for long ignored it. Not for reasons of foreign domination, but of 'Slavophil' isolationism, and overall subervience to authority, Russia did not really begin to develop the printed book till the nineteenth century. The Yugoslavs however from the outset reached eagerly out to the West, to learn the new skill, and the first Slav book in Cyrillic was set for the *Serb Church*, in Montenegro, by the monk Makarie,

² For one brief illumination of this question, the reader may consult the author's paper on certain uses of the Russian aspect in the Slavonic Review for May, 1949 (The Translation of Certain Uses of the Russian Imperfective; Alec Brown; pp. 503-514).

trained in Venice! Nor was Peter the Great the real pioneer of simplification and western 'modernization' of the old Gothic Cyrillic. He was preceded by more than a generation by the Slovene Trubar, who devised and printed in Tübingen, both in a beautiful simplified Glagolitic and in a 'modern face' Cyrillic alphabet, — the model for Peter's much-vaunted 'civil alphabet', (which was 'made in Holland').

During the Renaissance, Yugoslav Dalmatia had played a vigorous part. Here we should not forget that Dalmatia is only part Catholic. Much of the lovely architecture is work of the Serb Church, and throughout the dark centuries of the eastern half of Yugoslavia, Dubrovnik was a centre of inspiration and solace.

When the first Yugoslav step towards liberation was taken, shortly before the Congress of Vienna, Obradovitch, a Westernizing Serb, was immediately summoned by the Government to found a university on western lines. Though Karageorge and his men were in close contact with the Russians, it was to Westernizers that they looked for their education. Obradovitch had just made a grand tour of Germany, France, and England, where he was in touch with fellow-freemasons. Though Slovene and Croat literature prior to 1918 did, for obvious reasons, draw inspiration from Vienna (but after all that also is a Western centre), the centre of inspiration for the Serbian intellectuals of the past fifty years or more has been, consistently and passionately — Paris.

All this reflects itself in the present leadership of Yugoslavia. For though there is never the slightest suggestion that the new Yugoslavia wishes to imitate what is rotten in the Western world, it is equally clear that though for a variety of reasons ever anxious to develop links with the great Slav-speaking nation to the east, this Yugoslavia feels itself, and is happy to feel itself, thoroughly at home in the West, and wishes to go on absorbing what good is produced there. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, again for a variety of reasons, quite understandable and justifiable, does not, with the exception of the rare Westernizer, feel in the least at home in the West, and does not really want to do so. There is nothing to reproach the Russians with here; we have only to reproach ourselves, if we ever tend to assume that Yugoslavia in any way resembles the Soviet Union, or can develop in the same way.

Finally, **twelfth** — for we have suggested sufficient cardinal points of difference³ between the two countries, — the 'Slav' nature of the Russian

³ It would be tempting to pursue important cultural distinctions, were the subject not so vast as to require far too much space. Yet a comparison in the field of music may not be out of place. In the Soviet Union, even thirty years after the Revolution, the general public has not grown up sufficiently to appreciate the orchestral symphony, and the Soviet rulers have to try to browbeat authors into producing popular choral works. In Yugoslavia the position is very different. For here we find that foreign rule, in earlier centuries, absorbed Yugoslav composers and thematic material into the broad stream of European music (Haydn was a Croat; the last movement of Beethoven's G major violin sonata is a brilliant rendering of a North Yugoslav dance), and poverty compelled early nineteenth century Yugoslav domestic composers to concentrate on choral music (Mokranjac, etc.). From the revolution, the Yugoslav peoples therefore tend to expect not more choral music, but a higher level of music, and orchestral music. Hence the well elaborated symphonic work of a composer like Sulek, which the Soviet Union would undoubtedly suppress as 'unpopular', to-day draws huge, enthusiastic and understanding audiences!

proper and of the Yugoslav, and by the Russian proper we mean the 'Great Russian', in distinction from the other half of the Soviet Union, over which he rules.

All peoples are mixtures, and all mixtures are different. The ancestry of the Russians includes a variety of peoples speaking Finno-Ugrian languages, on which a people speaking a Slav language imposed a superior culture about 1,500 years ago, to which subsequently Scandinavian and Mongolian peoples added a stiffening, State-building strain of blood, or culture.

The ancestry of the Yugoslavs includes a variety of Balkan peoples, in close cultural connection and affinity with the great ancient cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean. On these peoples speaking Slav languages imposed a superior culture in the Dark Ages.¹ Under the stimulus of a Mongolian people, (the Bulgars), one section of them (the forbears of modern Bulgarians), tried to erect a new-Byzantine Empire, but this additional element did not affect the main South Slav peoples, the peoples of Yugoslavia, who evolved their own State forms.

The foregoing outline observations of fact are perhaps necessary, to check the natural tendency of those who are not acquainted with the Slav world to imagine that Yugoslavia somehow, like the moon once from this earth, broke away from the parent Russian body. At the historical back of the Russians lies the cruel and endless problem of maintaining life in an endless space of forest and swamp, under hard climatic conditions. At the historical back of the Yugoslavs lies the problem of developing social forms, under traditional Balkan influences, in fairly small mountain-isolated communities. It is not surprising if the Russians as State builders tended to become preoccupied with welding an armorphous, endlessly extensible mass into one State. Nor is it surprising if the Yugoslavs as State builders tended to become preoccupied with the problems of how to allow individuals to live their own lives within the predetermined area of their country.

Into speculation on what future developments will be, we shall make no attempt to enter, beyond observing that one cannot hope to estimate coming trends at any time, without careful study and analysis, not only of the objective 'factors of the moment', but also, in as much profundity as possible, the historical origins, development, and outlines of main human spiritual (or mental) factors. This, in fact, is the basically Marxist approach. Only by such a process can mankind hope to draw slowly nearer to a

¹ When a conquered people changes its language, that is not necessarily because the original inhabitants have been wiped out. History provides examples of invaders predominant in numbers adopting the speech of the conquered, and *vice versa*. Or we may have an invading people supplying the language structure, but adopting much of the vocabulary of the conquered (Greek). Or we may have the invading people supplying part of the vocabulary, but powerless to affect the language structure (Welsh and English). There is good reason to assume that the structure of a language is dominant when the culture of those who speak it proves more viable than that of another people. Roman culture gave only a few words to the parent language of Welsh (Celtic), but Anglo-Saxon culture was absorbed in the end mainly through peaceable means by the Celtic-speaking Romano-British people of Arthur's kingdom, because the general culture was superior to that of the Celts who from the Romans had accepted only trappings and a few names of things.

Similarly with the Yugoslavs, who did not necessarily supplant the earlier inhabitants of much of the Balkan Peninsula, but who certainly brought with them a superior culture and social organization — an exact parallel to the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Britain.

reasonable world society, because only by such process can nation understand nation.

It would at the same time be idle to pretend that one is indifferent, above the battle (the writer speaks for himself), in the present 'dispute' between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. Anyone acquainted with what is said and what is reality will know that contemporary Moscow is even further from a true Marxist approach in international affairs (or any, for that matter), than many a statesman of the old school, whose 'instinctive' impulses were largely unsystematized, yet at least did base their conclusions on some kind of observation of contemporary facts and past history.

Till yesterday the world seemed divided into Communist and Non-communist. Now we see that there is no such simple alignment of 'power groups' (however much Moscow would like it to be so). There is a new conflict, one between men who reject all moral values in their self-interest in power, and men who try not to do so, and that conflict tends more and more to transcend frontiers, melting political movements in a world crucible. But in so far as the momentary concrete form taken by that conflict is that between Russian Goliath and Yugoslav David, we may find that the past of the two countries illuminates both the reasons for the clash of the world's first two socialist States, and also, when we ask how it is that Russians have so seriously lost all moral sense, while the Yugoslavs have grown so powerful a moral sense, the very origins of the larger conflict which must interest every nation and every man.

January 9th, 1950.

Old Comrades, I

... During his second stay in Moscow he had the opportunity of talking to the members of the Political Bureau during a dinner given by Stalin. On the German side there were present also old members of the Party, like Gauleiter Forster, who at the end of the ceremony stated that everything had gone off as if one had been speaking to old comrades. And he could not avoid the same impression himself. (Reich Foreign Minister Ribbentrop. Rome. 10.3.40. *Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*).

Old Comrades, II

Moreover, in the conflict between Fascism and Bolshevism there was no doubt where my sympathies and convictions lay. On the two occasions when I met Mussolini our personal relations had been intimate and easy. I would never have encouraged Britain to make a breach with him about Abyssinia or roused the League of Nations against him unless we were prepared to go to war in the last extreme. (p. 121, *Their Finest Hour*, Winston Churchill, Houghton Mifflin and Co., Boston, 1949).

'I declare I have never been the enemy of Italian greatness, nor ever at heart the foe of the great Italian lawgiver.' (Churchill to Mussolini, 16.5.40, quoted in *Their Finest Hour*, p. 122).

William Cobbett, Heinrich Heine, Erik Erikson

CRITICAL REVUE

I, Erik Erikson, the sole survivor among the authors of this revue, have been besieged with inquiries as to why I have not written for so long.¹ One reader is of the opinion: 'You have been silent for a year. What a shame. I would very much like to be roused to indignation by you again!' Well, I can no longer escape my good reputation. I shall have to help this man.

The occasion for a literary stroke was soon at hand. An article on the American State debt came my way. I said to myself immediately: 'So what — lots of things come your way!' And to prove it forthwith, mercifully I received a communication from the American Treasury on the *decrease* of the American State debt from one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two dollars and twenty-five cents to one thousand eight hundred and nineteen dollars and fifty-eight cents *per capita*. And how did this prodigy of the debt reduction *per capita* come about? Chiefly, says the Treasury, through increase of population.

Ah, what a perspective! Blessed be the hosts of the newly born! Another fifty million babies and the shared liability in the mortgage will have dropped to nothing *per capita*. Yet another fifty millions and every baby will come into the world with a bank account that is something to crow about. With an angelic smile it will lisp: 'There, dear parents, this is from me. Your labours have not been in vain!'

As may easily be imagined, I dilly-dallied over my calculations in a regular fervour of enthusiasm for State debts which, by means of a systematic *increase of births*, I was hoping to convert from a minus into a plus, from an affliction into a blessing. What an infinite field of operations! I had an inkling of what the American pioneers must have felt when they encountered unlimited possibilities (a round 300 milliard dollars in 1947!). An intoxicating plenitude. Debts of every description, especially State debts, existed throughout the world. Mankind seemed to have laboured for the sole purpose of producing State debts and no sooner had I planted every inch of our planet, on land and on sea, with infants and their bank accounts in accordance with my calculations when, suddenly, before the white cliffs of Dover, there sounded in my ears the words '*National Debt*'. Whether Sir Stafford Cripps had at that moment been preening himself on '*the national debt*' and the breezes had borne the fame of the Labour Government to me — whatever it was, I do not know. Whatever it was, I woke with a start — '*the national debt*'? — where had I heard the phrase before?

A person, like myself, who wants to write a revue and has planned it meticulously, will by the same token remember the right reply at the right moment to his own poser. This I had depended on and therefore I am now able to announce complacently and at the right moment that '*The National*

¹ Erik Erikson is a frequent contributor to our sister periodical, *Dinge der Zeit*.

Debt' was sung most adequately and with extensive quotations from William Cobbett by Heinrich Heine in his *English Fragments*.

First I would like to get something off my chest. Heine had no personal fondness for this great political pamphleteer, old Cobbett (who, sometimes, called himself Peter Porcupine). 'Let no one censure me,' he exclaimed, 'for quoting Cobbett. He might be open to the charge of being unfair, abusive and plebeian but it cannot be denied that the man possesses a very eloquent spirit and that he is very often completely right, as in the foregoing passage [in this article it will come afterwards! E.E.] He is a watchdog who furiously attacks anybody he does not know, frequently bites the best friend of the house, is forever barking and just because of his incessant barking is never heard when he is barking about a real thief. For this reason, those prominent thieves who are engaged in plundering England never consider it necessary to throw the growling Cobbett a bone and therewith to stop his jaws. This vexes the dog most bitterly and he bares his hungry fangs.'

It was not the only occasion on which Heine erred in his judgement of an individual and failed to understand why the refined and unrefined thieves alike could permit themselves to mock the apparently futile barking of the 'watchdog' (do we not recall the 'fierce' Fourier who was also a sort of 'futile' beast biting everything around?) Heine wrote his *English Fragments* in 1828. Cobbett died in 1835. In 1837, the Chartists were already on the march with Cobbett's demands (universal suffrage, etc.) and the echo which they gave to his barking *then* did extort a couple of juicy morsels from the thief. But Heine never falls below his own stature and does not allow his personal feelings and predilections to prevent him paying tribute to the eloquent spirit. He opens his contribution to this revue, then, with a humorous and extremely topical piece.²

The New Ministry

Last summer I came to know a philosopher in Bedlam, who with stealthy eyes and whispering voice gave me many important disclosures about the origin of evil. Like many of his colleagues he also thought that in this matter you must accept something historical. Concerning myself I readily agreed to such an acceptance, and declared that the root of the evil in the world was due to the circumstance that the good God has created too little money.

'It is very easy for you to talk,' answered the philosopher, 'the good God was very hard up at Kassa when He created the world. For that purpose He was obliged to borrow the money from the devil, and to make over to him the whole creation as hypothec. As consequently the good God in due legal form still owes the world to him, so also He may, out of delicacy, not prevent him from disporting himself therein, and causing confusion and mischief. But the devil for his part has again a very strong personal interest that the world should not utterly perish, as thereby his hypothec should be lost. He takes care, therefore, to make it as stupid as possible, and the good God, who for His part is not stupid, knows well that He has His secret guarantee in the self-interest of the devil. Thus He often goes so far as to intrust the whole government of the world to him, that is to say, He gives the devil

² The following passages are excerpts from Heine's *English Fragments*, in the translation by Sarah Norris. (Published by L. R. Grant and Son, Edinburgh, 1880.)

instructions to form a Ministry. Then it happens as a matter of course that Samiel obtains command of the hellish hosts, Beelzebub becomes Chancellor, Vizliputzli becomes Secretary of State, the old grandmother gets the Colonies, and so on. These confederates then administer affairs after their own fashion, and whilst they, notwithstanding the evil of their own hearts, find themselves constrained out of self-interest to further the welfare of the world, they yet indemnify themselves somewhat in that they always make use of the basest means for good purposes. Of late, indeed, they carried matters so badly that even God in heaven could no longer behold such enormity, and accordingly gave an angel instructions to form the new Ministry. This angel gathered around him all good spirits. Joyful enthusiasm pervaded the world again; it became light, and the evil spirits vanished. Still they did not quietly fold their claws in their laps, they worked secretly against everything good, they poisoned the new sources of prosperity, they spitefully crushed every blossom of the new spring. With their amendments they destroyed the tree of life, chaotic destruction threatened to engulf everything, so that in the end the good God will again have to transfer the government to the devil in order that the evil spirits, through their worst efforts, may derive the least benefit. Thus thou seest the evil affect of a debt.'

This communication of my friend in Bedlam explains perhaps the present change in the English Ministry. . . . It cannot be denied that after Canning's death the Whigs were not in a position to maintain the peace of England, because the measures which they had on that account to take were being continually defeated by the Tories. The King, to whom the preservation of the public peace, that is, the security of his throne, appears the most important matter, must perforce again give over the administration of the State to the Tories. And oh! they will now again as before administer all the fruits of the industry of the people into their own treasury. Like Jewish speculators, they will run up the price of grain, until John Bull, becoming meagre with hunger, will at last for a morsel of bread sell himself to those high masters who will put him at the plough, and beat him there till he dare not once even grumble. Then on the one side the Duke of Wellington will threaten him with the sword, and on the other side the Archbishop of Canterbury will knock him on the head with the Bible — and there will be peace in the land.

The source of this evil is the National Debt, or, as Cobbett calls it, the King's Debt. Cobbett quite rightly remarks, for example, that whilst one places in front of all institutions the name of the King, as the King's army, the King's navy, the King's courts, the King's prisons, etc., yet notwithstanding, the great debt which in reality owes its origin to those institutions is never called the King's Debt; and it is the only institution by which the nation is shown the honour of having something named after her.

The worst of the evil is the debt. True enough, it enables the English State to preserve itself, so that even its basest devil cannot destroy it; but at the same time it is also the reason why the whole of England is become a large treadmill, where the people must work day and night to pay its creditors. Hence also it arises that England becomes weaned from all youthful joyful yearnings, and bends a grey head over the cares of accounting. Thus it generally happens with all men heavily in debt, they are ground down in dull resignation, and do not know how to help themselves —

although 900,000 guns and just as many swords and bayonets lie stored in the Tower of London, yet the well-fed red-coated Beefeaters who are on guard there could easily be overpowered.

* * *

In the next extract from the 'Fragments' (IX, 'The Debt'), Heine goes on to say the following:

'Debts, just as patriotism, religion, and honour, belong, it is true, to the privileges of men — the lower animals being exempt; but debts are also quite the pre-eminent affliction of mankind, and as they ruin individuals, so also they bring nations to ruin. They appear to restore the old Fate in the national tragedies of our time. England cannot escape this Fate: its Ministers see its horrors approaching, and die with the despair of impotence.

'Were I Royal Prussian Lands-Valuator, or a civil engineer, I should calculate in the usual way, and reduce the whole sum of the English debt into *silber groschen*, and then accurately tell how many times I should cover with these the *Grosse Friedrichstrasse*, or even the whole earth ball. But calculating was never my forte, and I should prefer giving up to an Englishman the fatal business of counting his debts and thence reckoning the actual necessities of the Ministry. For this work there is no man more competent than old Cobbett, and I give the following arguments from the last number of his *Political Register* [the *Weekly Political Register* was famous, appearing from 1802 until Cobbett's death! E.E.]'

Extremely sagacious readers will have guessed that the time has now come to permit old, I would rather say the great, Cobbett to make his contribution to my review. Sagacity always proves to be correct — for the less sagacious I end all doubt with the following title:

Cobbett on the Debt, the National Debt

1. This Government — or on the contrary, this aristocracy and Church, or if you will, this Government — borrowed a large sum of money with which she has purchased many victories by land and sea, a number of victories of every sort and size.

2. Meanwhile I must premise by inquiring why and wherefore these victories were bought. The occasion was the French Revolution, which had made an end of all *aristocratic privileges* and *clerical tithes*; and the purpose was the prevention of a Parliamentary Reform in England, which would most likely have resulted in a similar destruction of all aristocratic privileges and clerical tithes.

3. Now in order to prevent the example of the French from being imitated by the English, it was necessary to lay hold on the French [I am left speechless — only the Germans 'lay hold' on or 'grasp' countries! E.E.], to arrest their progress, to endanger their newly-acquired freedom, to force them to desperate acts, and at last to make the Revolution such a source of terror and dismay to the people, that, under the name of freedom, they pictured to themselves nothing but an aggregate of wickedness, horror, and bloodshed. Thus the English people themselves would become, through the inspiration of fear, even actually enamoured with that horrible despotism

government that once blossomed in France, notwithstanding that every Englishman at all times detested it from the days of Alfred the Great to those of the Georges.

4. In order to bring about those designs the co-operation of various nations was needful. Those nations were actually subsidized with English money — French emigrants were maintained with English money — in short, a twenty-two years' war was carried on in order to crush that people who had risen against *aristocratic privileges and clerical tithes*.

5. Our Government further gained '*numberless victories*' over the French, who, as it appears, were always beaten. But these our '*numberless victories*' were bought, that is, they were achieved by mercenary troops hired with our money; and we had in our pay, at one and the same time, whole squadrons of French, Dutch, Swiss, Italian, Russian, Austrian, Bavarian, Hessian, Hanoverian, Prussian, Spanish, Portuguese, Neapolitan, Maltese and God knows how many nations [nothing more than a 'grasping' rabble! E.E.] besides.

6. By such hiring of foreign services and by the use of our own fleet and land forces, we *bought* so many victories over the French — who, poor devils! had no money to enable them to purchase in the same manner — that we at last overwhelmed their Revolution, and restored the aristocracy in a certain degree, although we could not by any means restore the clerical tithes in an equal degree.

7. After we had satisfactorily perfected this great work, and had also counteracted even Parliamentary Reform in England, our Government raised a lusty cry of victory, whereby she strained her lungs not a little, and in this effort of shouting was loudly supported by every creature in the land who benefited by public taxation.

8. For nearly two whole years this successful nation revelled in the intoxication of exuberant joy. In order to celebrate those victories there swarmed everywhere jublations, public games, triumphal arches, military reviews, and the like amusements at the cost of more than a quarter of a million sterling. I believe also that the House of Commons voted unanimously the enormous sum of three millions sterling, in order to erect triumphal arches, monumental columns, and statuary by which to immortalize *the glorious event of war*.

9. Ever since that time we have had the good fortune to live under the Government of the same personages who had conducted our affairs during this glorious war.

10. Ever since that time we have lived at profound peace with all the world; and this is still the case notwithstanding our little skirmishes with the Turks. Consequently there seems to be no reason in the world why we should not be happy now. We have peace, to be sure, our land yields its fruit in abundance, and as the philosophers and lawgivers of our time admit, we are the most enlightened nation on the whole earth. We have schools, to be sure, everywhere in order to instruct the rising generation; not only have we a rector or vicar or curate in every diocese of the kingdom, but we have besides in every diocese perhaps six other teachers of religion — each differing from the other — so that our land is sufficiently provided with instructions of every sort, and no man of this fortunate land may live in a state of ignorance. Therefore our amazement must be so much the greater

when we find a Prime Minister of this fortunate land regarding his duties as so heavy and grievous a burden.

11. Ah! we have a single misfortune, and that is a great one; we have bought some victories — they were glorious — it was a good piece of business — they were three or four times better value than we paid for, as Mrs. Tweazle said to her husband when she came home from market. There was great inquiry and demand for victories; in short, we could not do better than provide ourselves so cheaply with such a large amount of glory.

12. But I confess it with sorrow, we have, like many other people, *borrowed* the money to buy these *victories* of which we now can in no way get rid, more than a man can get rid of his wife when once he has had the good fortune to take such a fair burden upon his shoulders.

13. Thus it happens that every Minister who undertakes our affairs must also provide for the payment of our victories, whereof no penny has yet been paid.

14. It is true he does not need to provide for the payment of capital and interest all at once; but he must, in God's pity, most certainly provide for the *interest*, the pay of the army, and other expenses arising out of our *victories*. He must therefore be a man of pretty strong nerves if he undertakes this little business.

15. Before we meddled with buying victories to satiate ourselves with glory, we already bore a debt of little more than *two hundred millions*, whilst all the parochial relief in England and Wales together did not amount to more than *two millions* per annum. Then we had nothing of that burden which is now laid upon us under the name of *Dead Weight*, and which has arisen entirely from our thirst for glory.

16. Besides this *borrowed money* our Government has also indirectly raised a great loan from the *poor*, by increasing the common taxes to such a height that the poor were ground down far more than formerly, in consequence of which the number of paupers and the amount of parochial relief were simultaneously decreased to an astonishing degree.

17. The poor-rates rose from *two millions* to *eight millions* yearly; the poor have now, as it were, the right of mortgages, an hypothec on the land. Hence results also gain a debt of *six millions* in addition to those other debts that our passion for glory and the purchase of *our victories* have occasioned.

18. The *Dead Weight* consists of annuities granted in the names of pensions to a multitude of men, women and children in respect of services which those men have, or ought to have rendered towards the achievement of our victories.

19. The capital of the debt which this Government has contracted in order to create victories for itself may be roughly estimated as follows:

Capitalized sum of the National Debt ...	800,000,000
Capitalized sum of Poor-Rates ...	150,000,000
<i>Dead Weight</i> to be reckoned as a Capital Debt ...	175,000,000

Total Sterling £1,125,000,000

That is to say, *eleven hundred and twenty-five millions* sterling, at five per cent. interest per annum, represents an annual payment of fifty-six millions. Indeed this is about the present amount, only that the *Parochial Relief Debt*

does not appear in the accounts that are submitted to Parliament, because the land bears its burden directly in the different parishes. If therefore you deduct that six millions or so of poor-rates from the fifty-six millions, it follows that the creditors of the National Debt and the *Dead Weight* people actually swallow up all that is left.

20. But all the same, the poor rates are just as much a *debt* as the debt of the creditors of the National Debt, and obviously spring from the same sources. By the terrible burden of taxation the poor were crushed down. It is true every other person was also oppressed, but everyone except the poor knew how to throw off this burden more or less from his shoulders, and it fell at last with terrible weight wholly on the poor. They lost their beer-barrels, their copper kettles, their pewter plates, their clocks, their beds, and everything even to their tools. They lost their clothes, and were obliged to wrap themselves in rags. They lost the flesh from their bones — they could not be driven to more dire extremity — and of that which was taken from them, they received something back under the name of increased parochial relief. This is therefore a *true debt*, a true right of a bondholder on the land. The interest of this debt could, it is true, be withheld, but if this were attempted the persons who should demand it would approach in masses and get themselves paid in full, no matter in what currency. This is then a *true debt*, and a debt that will have to be paid down on the nail, and I positively assert that it will be allowed the preference over all other debts.

21. Accordingly it is no great wonder when you see the trouble of those (Ministers) who undertake such affairs! The chief wonder is that any of them should ever consent to undertake their management, if he were not empowered to bring about as he thought best a radical change of the whole system.

22. The two first-named debts, to wit, the National Debt and the *Dead-Weight* Debt, were formerly paid — or to put it better, interest only was formerly paid — in a depreciated paper money of whose value fifteen shillings were scarcely worth a Winchester bushel of wheat. This was the manner in which the national creditors were paid for many years. But in the year 1819 a profound statesman, Mr. Peel, made the great discovery that it was better for the nation to pay their debts in hard cash, of which five shillings instead of fifteen shillings in paper money were worth as much as a Winchester bushel of wheat.

23. The *nominal sum* was never changed! It always remained the same; nothing happened but that Mr. Peel and the Parliament *had changed its value*. It was their desire that the debt should be paid in the form of coin, of which five shillings, after much reckoning, were found to be of as much value as fifteen shillings of the paper money *wherein the debt was contracted and wherein the interest had been paid during many years*.

24. Thence it followed that from 1819 until the present day the nation lived in the most disconsolate condition. It was eaten up by its creditors, who were mostly Jews, or rather Christians who acted like Jews, and who were not so easily persuaded to rush the less greedily on their prey.

25. Many an attempt was made in order to mitigate in some of the consequences of the change which took place in the value of money in 1819; but these attempts failed, and had once almost sprung the whole thing into the air.

26. There is no possibility of relief in seeking to reduce the annual payments to the creditors of the National Debt and of the *Dead-Weight Debt*. In order to effect so much a reduction of the debt, just so much a reduction must be exacted from the land — in order to prevent it from bringing forth great revolutions — in order that half a million people, in and about London, may not die of hunger. Therefore it is necessary to undertake beforehand greater proportional reductions *elsewhere before* attempting the reduction of the above two debts or their interest.

27. As we have already seen, the victories were bought with the intention of opposing Parliamentary Reform in England, and to maintain aristocratic privileges and clerical tithes. It would therefore be a revolting atrocity did we deprive those people who borrowed the money for us, of their legal interest, or even were we to deprive of payment those people who hired out the hands that procured our victories. It would be a horrible deed, that would draw down on us the wrath of Heaven, if we perpetrated it whilst the honorary places of the aristocracy, their pensions, sinecures, royal grants, military rewards, and lastly, while even the tithes of the clergy remained inviolate.

28. *Here, here*, therefore lies the difficulty. He who will be Minister will be Minister of a land which has had a great passion for *victories* — which has sufficiently provided itself with victories and created unheard-of glories for itself — but alas! it has not yet paid for these glories, and now hands over the reckoning to the Minister, who knows not wherewithal he will get the money to pay.

Erikson's Conclusion

How the picture of the past and that of the present match each other and how colossal the advances made in the intervening period! Only recently I read in the newspaper of a shocking increase in Ministerial-illness — the health of no fewer than three pillars of the British Labour Government broke down under the burden of their 'work and worries'. They should be placed on the reparations bill while gratefully noting that the passion for *victories* on the English model has become universal. Indeed, nowadays every country in the world has already created unheard-of military renown for itself and no longer finds cause to postpone the avowal that — alas! the glory has not yet been paid for! Nor has the passion for hiring foreign hands, for obtaining victories and for incurring debts, suffered the slightest diminution. Did I not see with my own eyes in France in 1940 British colonial troops (Indians, tall as trees, with ornamental wooden carts and elegant mules which inspire comparison with the Indians, tall as trees, although I strongly doubt whether a single cart or mule escaped the Dunkirk catastrophe)? And is not Britain borrowing money from America because she cannot resist the desire to bespatter herself anew with unheard-of glory through the assistance of now thoroughly-civilized peoples, that is, of head-hunters despatched by air to the place of victories.

Even my best-willed readers will not be able to dispute the fact that I am (as always) completely right — even the weakest among them will take care not to oppose naked facts. For I have taken as motto of this revue, the

¹ See *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. 279.

threat — Falstaff, I know you and will 'lard the lean earth' with your guts. And therefore I am also completely right in affirming that the *last*, the *very last*, remedy to be allowed for the consequences of the victories, is that of 1828. That remedy is a very rude and rough one and consists in draining the 'resources of the land' which in everyday language means curtailing the food, drink and clothing of the people. Proof?

While I cruised before the cliffs of Dover and planted the last of the infants with bank assets, I saw in my mind's eye the following headlines — 'Britain Starving to Greatness!' — 'Britain Tightens Her Belt!' — 'Britain Blocks Imports!' — 'Sweet Rationing Again!' — 'Britain in Crisis!' To cut a long story short — the British 'Labour' Government is placing heavier burdens on the people than the Tories would have dared to impose without this example. This is called 'Socialism' and from Right to 'Left' such a spate of nonsense has been scribbled on the subject (bless you, good writers, source of my surfeit!) that I cannot help pointing to the gist of the matter. The gist of the matter is — Starve yourselves to greatness as the Prussians of old did! Or to put it in Russian — Yo ho heave ho without end!

* * *

I know what my reader is going to say and I agree with him. I would have been quite right in asserting that this revue has, for the most part, been my own — copy-work. But that does not bother me. There is a great art in proper copy-work, and some scribblers never learn it. Besides I participated in the discussions on the 'Outlines for the Organization and Activity of a Democratic Movement' and in the course of it came across the footnote (good things come in small parcels) from Hegel — to the effect that the free person is not envious but readily acknowledges what is great and sublime and rejoices that it is so.

No, I am completely right and so I am completely unenvious! I am as free to rejoice in Heine and the great Cobbett as in the great mountain of debts which I again readily acknowledge is great and sublime. And, not to forget anything — I am glad that it is so and that it is a standing warning to the numberless victories of governments over the last remnants of Reason.

Coffin au lait

The Klerksdorp (Transvaal) Chamber of Commerce has decided to ask all undertakers in the town to provide separate hearses for whites and non-whites.

A member of the chamber said that the town council had agreed to the chamber's request for separate ambulances for whites and non-whites.

It was unpleasant to contemplate, he said, that the hearse which carried a corpse of a native to the cemetery one day might be used next day to convey the coffin of a white person.

(News Chronicle, London, October 17, 1949.)

Ken Eaton

GERMANY—AN ERSATZ DEMOCRACY*

ERSATZ.

That German word adequately describes the modern German 'democracy'.

An ersatz house of parliament.

An ersatz constitution.

An ersatz society.

The building itself, in appearance similar to an hotel for American tourists, and lacking the grandeur of the usual European building, typifies the new democracy.

The constitution, modelled on the lines of Western democracy, has all the phraseology of such constitutions; but, behind this phraseology, the political reality of the Occupation, and the economic reality of a rotten society, leaning heavily on Marshall Aid, and stinking of inequality, corruption and hypocrisy, cannot be hidden.

Capitalist democracy is always ersatz. Political equality is a sham without economic equality. And the right of a people to vote every four or five years is not democracy; the delegation of power and responsibility by the people to a tiny minority, and their passive role in the intervening period is the very antithesis of democracy.

But even capitalist democracy is not operative in Germany. To function efficiently, parliament must work within the framework of an expanding society. It has flourished in Britain because the ruling class has not had the same need of repression as their German colleagues. An expanding economy has allowed the class struggle to be blunted and has enabled the ruling class to dissent among themselves, to have a two-party system which, while disagreeing on minor details, agree on the fundamental necessity of maintaining intact the capitalist system of society.

Such conditions have rarely, if ever, existed in Germany. Struggling for a place in the sun, German capitalism has not been able to afford a democracy, and attempts to make democracy work have been short-lived.

In present-day Germany, the conditions for capitalist democracy do not exist. The presence of occupation armies, and the reliance on America and

* Reprinted from the *Socialist Leader* by permission. Readers of 'The Great Utopia' will note that we do not agree with the *leit-motif* of this article (the 'working class' revolution and the limiting of the task of creating an independent democratic Germany to the working class). We publish it however since the writer, from personal observation, corroborates some of the facts put forward in our analysis of the present situation in Germany, as in our leaflet 'Occupation Unaltered' (see *Contemporary Issues*, Vol. I. No. 4)—Eds.

Britain are not conducive to the flowering of democracy. And behind the façade of the Bonn parliament, stands not the might of an independent German bourgeoisie, but a bourgeoisie dependent for its position on America and Britain. The most important force in Germany to-day is not the Bonn parliament, but the Control Commission of Germany backed by the Occupation Armies.

The relation of the C.C.G. to the Occupation Army was explained to me quite simply by a C.C.G. official. 'Our job', he told me, in the bland manner of the stupid civil servant that he was, 'is to teach the Germans how to run their country democratically. And the Occupation Army serves as a kind of police force, if the Germans misbehave. For instance, we had to call out the Manchesters at Oberhausen when they tried to prevent the dismantling which had been agreed upon by the Allies. We have to show them that they must not resort to force.'

Politically and economically, the Occupation authorities are all powerful.

The Occupation Statute enables 'the occupation authorities . . . acting under the instruction of their Governments, to resume in whole or in part the exercise of full authority if these consider that to do so is essential' One of the conditions under which the resumption of power is justified is 'to preserve democratic government in Germany'.

I need not labour the stupidity of such a condition. If conditions do not exist for the working of democracy, the intervention of the best-intentioned people in the world would not make democracy work. And the intervention of civil servant bureaucrats and the blimps of the Occupation army are not likely to be in the best interests of democracy.

The character of future intervention can be derived from experience of the past. The decrees of the German Economic Council at Frankfurt for nationalization of basic industries, for agrarian reform, and for a tax to equalize the war burden, were prevented by the occupation authorities. Whereas, the revival of Nazi ideas in the new Deutsche Partei have not been interfered with. (I am not necessarily agreeing with the nationalization measures or advocating intervention in the affairs of the Deutsche Partei, but merely using these two cases to indicate the character which intervention has taken in the past.)

In addition to these latent powers of intervention, the occupation authorities still issue licences to the press, and have power to screen the parties. All information on the press and the parties must be given to them.

As if these political controls were not enough, economic control of the economy is held by the Control Commission. A country which does not control its economy, is in subjection to those who do. The weakening of Germany by dismantling, the prohibitions and restrictions on industry and civil aviation, the control over foreign trade and exchange and over internal trade, the control of scientific research are bad enough to reduce the independence of Germany. But the agreement of the Foreign Ministers to establish an international authority for the Ruhr takes away from Germany its economic backbone.

How can parliamentary democracy exist in such conditions? I repeat once again that parliamentary democracy is a sham, that it is no substitute for socialist democracy. If, therefore, the German parliamentary system fails in the future, we must attack the attempt to lay the blame for such failure on

the German people. It will be the fault of the economic and political weakness of the German system, accentuated by the occupation policies of the Allies.

The political parties

Such conditions are not conducive to the flowering of a genuine parliamentary democracy, and in the political parties, corruption, incompetence and demagogic vote-catching are rife.

Early in the year, all parties acclaimed with loud applause the new Bonn constitution, with the exception of the Communist party, which on its posters, portrayed the other parties as subservient to the Allies (not mentioning, of course, its own subservience to Russia). Yet, at the time of the election, all parties engaged in a demagogic vote-catching campaign, trying to capitalize the anti-Allied feeling which four years of occupation rule has engendered in the German people.

The Social Democratic Party is largely led by old men, who have suffered for years in Nazi concentration camps, and who now wish to have an easier life. Whilst we honour these men for the suffering which they have undergone, we cannot but expose their present obstruction to the development of a genuine German socialism.

The corruption of the post-war epoch is still firmly entrenched. Many people are dependent on their representatives — mayor, councillors, landtag and Bundtag representatives — for favours, in the way of getting houses, flats, licences, jobs, etc., so that the exposure of such corruption is difficult.

Political hypocrisy is rampant. In the first meeting of the Bonn Parliament, no party wanted to sit on the right.

Attitude of the People

Is it surprising, therefore, that under these conditions, the German people are sceptical of democracy?

In 1945, there were possibilities of showing to the German people a democratic alternative to Fascism. The defeat of the Nazis left a political vacuum which the Allied imperialists were unable to fill. But conditions since 1945 have been infinitely worse for the mass of the population than when the Nazis were in power

and the *good* that men do lives after them,

the *evil* is oft interred with their bones (with due respect to Shakespeare and Mark Antony).

They can excuse the Nazi atrocities by pointing out the atrocities of the Allies in their war policies. Hitler had a reason, according to his own philosophy, for exterminating the Jews, Communists, Socialists and other political opponents. What justification, unless it be the extermination of the German working class, had the Allies for their massacre of the civilian population in all the large towns. (One appalling example is that of Dresden, which was fired and bombed by American aircraft when full of refugees from the advancing Russian armies; 200,000 people were murdered, and the corpses had to be burnt with kerosene.)

The farce of de-nazification has also led to disillusionment. In Cologne, there was considerable hatred of the Nazis at the end of the war, due to their public hanging of eight youths six days before the end of the war. The

Nazis would have been dealt with by the people themselves. Instead of this, the de-nazification policy has worked in such a manner that the high Nazis got off very lightly, whilst the Nazis of very little importance were made examples of. At the end of the war, the Nazis were genuinely afraid, but now they are beginning to gain confidence, and are permeating the right-wing parties.

In these conditions therefore, the German working-class are uncertain and hesitant, lacking confidence in itself, and the same time trusting none of the official parties.

What, then, is to be our policy towards Germany?

Our first task is to do everything which will assist the development of self-confidence in the German working-class. Subservience to the Occupation authorities is no substitute for subservience to the Nazis. Our first demand must therefore be for the withdrawal of all occupation forces from Germany.

Secondly, we must oppose as strenuously as possible all propaganda suggesting the collective guilt of the German nation, their duty to repent, and the necessity of their re-education, behind which the present occupation stands.

And thirdly, we must assist any attempt of the working-class to develop an independent working-class policy, whether it is in opposition to dismantling, or in the national struggle in the development of a genuine Marxist socialist party.

It was stated at the Council of Europe that he who controls the Ruhr controls Europe. We must ensure that the German working-class controls the Ruhr. This can only be done if Germany is assured her independence. Occupation is the prop of the German bourgeoisie, and an independent capitalist Germany is an impossibility. An independent Germany, free from Allied Imperialism and Russian totalitarianism, will be the leader in the international social revolution.

The Great Mann's Democratic Socialism

. . . The authoritarian people's State has its bad side. It is accompanied, however, by *the* advantage that stupidity and impudence have to keep their mouths shut, once and for all. In the Eastern Zone (of Germany) I never received any filthy abusive letters and imbecilic slanderous articles as happened in the Western Zone — and not only 'happened'. Do I have to thank only the threat of Buchenwald for this — or an education of the people which, more thorough than in the Western Zone, is at pains to teach respect for a spiritual existence like mine? . . .

. . . Force is, of course, an evil thing, and the concentration camp a terrible method of agitation. But attempts to realize Socialism without violence . . . have never proved successful. . . .

(Thomas Mann in a letter to Paul Olberg, published in *Volksrecht*, Zürich).

CORRESPONDENCE

Winchester, Hants.
November 7th, 1949.

The Editor,
Contemporary Issues,
10, Blomfield Court,
London, W.9.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for sending me the Autumn issue of your Journal. Your criticism of my views calls for reply and I beg that you will accord me space for this purpose.

It is absurd to label Bolshevism 'fascist', unless all genuine meaning is to be stripped from the word leaving it merely as a synonym for any political system which the user may happen to dislike. A rather similar fate has overtaken 'democratic', which now applies to anything from the Communist puppet-regimes of Eastern Europe to the *laissez faire* Capitalism of the United States. This kind of thing is nominalism run riot.

Russian Bolshevism is State Capitalism of a sort, but differs entirely from the National-Socialist or Fascist State. The latter is Capitalism in the only form in which it can survive as a constructive and socially progressive force, i.e., subordinated to the needs of the Community and not free to exploit it as in Britain and America at the present time. Russia jumped straight out of Feudalism into Communism without any transition period of free, unfettered Capitalism. It is in fact true to say that Bolshevism is no more than a framework within which is being constructed a new weapon in the age-old struggle of the East against the West. Stalin may claim to be the successor of Marx and Engels, in fact he is the spiritual descendant of Jengis Khan and Timurlane.

National-Socialism is the 'rejoicing third' which, while itself revolutionary and progressive, opposes Asiatic Communism on the one hand and sterile, blind Reaction on the other. It neither bows the knee to Capitalism nor destroys it entirely, the good with the bad, preferring to limit its activities to socially desirable ends. It has roots in many ideologies, from the Syndicalism of Sorel to the State-Socialism of Ferdinand Lassalle. It did not originate with Hitler but took form in pre-1914 Austria. Reich Marshal Goering, after his condemnation at the Nuremberg farce, described it as an attempt to control the evolution of Socialism, to combine with the new ideas the old, cherished values.

It is true that in the Third Reich certain very objectionable features marred the System. I have no word to say in defence of such things as concentration-camps and secret police. I venture to suggest, however, that the virtual state of siege in which the Reich found itself after the downfall of the Weimar Republic led it into these excesses. Let us remember, as a prominent English political leader once pointed out to me, that French Liberalism had its birth in the Reign of Terror and the orgies of 'madame

la Guillotine'. German National-Socialism was given no time to come to flower and purge itself of its cruel, harsh features. It grew in the midst of foreign hostility and was destroyed long before its growth was finished.

It is as foolish to see in Germany's Third Reich only Belsen and Dachau as it would have been to see in France's Third Republic only 'Devil's Island'. As for the lack of 'Democracy' under Hitlerism, I can only say that in my experience the much-lauded right of minorities to express their views all too often merges into the power of minorities to impose their fads on majorities. An example from contemporary Britain is the extent to which the 'Lord's Day Observance Society', a tiny and unpopular body of religious fanatics, manage by invoking obsolete laws and ordinances to deny harmless pleasure on Sundays to millions of their fellow-countrymen. Until Nature begins gifting all individuals with a high standard of intelligence, and until Man follows this up by a universal high standard of education, (or, shall I say, until pigs sprout wings), Democracy will remain a chimera.

What is needed is not the guarantee that herds of the foolish and ignorant shall be at liberty to play at ducks and drakes with their destinies at the bidding of demagogues with axes to grind, but the guarantee that everyman and woman shall be given a fair chance to rise as high in the World as his or her intelligence and capabilities may permit. That men are born free and equal is a self-evident absurdity, that they are entitled to equality of opportunity an equally self-evident truth.

I like Otto Strasser's idea of a union between Britain and Germany. There is much in the German mind and outlook which is akin to the British and out of such a union, could it but be concluded in terms of equality, the West might rise again. The alternatives are American Dollar Imperialism and Russian Bolshevism, both of them as unpalatable as they are un-European.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,
J. C.-B.

Dear Mr. C.-B.,

As requested, we are publishing your reply of 7.11.49 to our comment in the Autumn number of *Contemporary Issues* on your two previous letters, together with our further comment.

At the outset, we must state that the logic of your arguments is beyond our comprehension, apart from the fact that, like so many members of the public, you have fallen victim to the prevalent falsification of the facts of recent history. You begin, for example, by writing that 'It is absurd to label Bolshevism "fascist"'. We are in perfect agreement with you on this and only wish to point out that you yourself commit the very absurdity you condemn by identifying Bolshevism with the Stalin régime. This has been done so often by public figures who find abuse easier than informed argument that one is surprised when you who say that you are so vehemently opposed to the methods of the demagogue succumb to them. For those who are determined to eschew labels and to argue in terms of content, Bolshevism (without the quotation marks) is the designation of a particular school of political thought whose demise was expedited by the Stalin counter-revolution decades ago which steam-rolled all forms of

independent political and intellectual endeavour. The same lapse is discernible in your subsequent statements as when you say 'Russia jumped straight out of Feudalism into Communism'. Do you really intend this to be regarded as a considered statement? Communism (once again in contradistinction to the label) has always been understood to refer to a form of society in which the State no longer has any place and which is based on an economy of abundance. It is to be hoped that you do not believe Stalin's claims that such a society has been achieved in Russia or is even being remotely approached. Stalin's claims, like those of Hitler and Mussolini, are remarkably unlike his practice. In fact, you refute your own statement by writing at the end of the paragraph: 'Stalin may claim to be the descendant of Marx and Engels, in fact he is the spiritual descendant of Jengis Khan and Timurlane.' Why then equate Stalinism with 'Bolshevism', 'Socialism' or 'Communism'?

What leads you astray is your eagerness to draw distinctions between Russian State Capitalism and that which prevailed in National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy when, in everything essential, there were no differences. If Hitler and Mussolini announced that they had made capitalism 'constructive and socially progressive' under their rule, the evidence for their assertion has still to be produced. It is undeniable that these régimes found expression in uninterrupted expansion of military industries and in wholesale destruction — in conformity with the general world trend of capitalism. Nor were the 'excesses' arising from State capitalism, which is necessarily bound up with the militarization of all spheres of life, accidental or incidental but integral features. It is simply not true that the Reich was in 'a virtual state of siege' or to attribute Hitler's 'excesses' to 'foreign hostility'. If anything, the Hitler Reich was surrounded by the utmost foreign encouragement. Not only did Hitler (and Mussolini) receive approval in public statements by individuals like Lloyd George, Churchill, Chamberlain and others, but he received active practical support in forms that were frequently more than tacit. It is difficult to see 'foreign hostility' to Hitler during the annexation of Austria or, merely one other glaring instance, during the seizure of Czecho-slovakia. If you would like to refresh your memory on these points, you have only to read, for example, the notorious leading article in *The Times* of September 7th, 1938, which might surprise you considering the circumstances. Or the documents of those who have some authority in these nefarious matters, the totalitarian leaders themselves. Mussolini certainly had no illusions on that score. 'The Duce declares that he is convinced that, even if Germany attacks Czechoslovakia, no European crisis will arise. Neither the French nor the English will intervene.' (*Ciano's Diplomatic Papers*, 18.7.38). Further perusal of Ciano's records will demonstrate that Mussolini had the very best of assurances on the subject—from Mr. Chamberlain himself. 'Foreign hostility' should be made of sterner stuff.

The 'foreign hostility' argument, of course, is also used by the followers of Stalin with whom, despite your labelling, you seem to have a great deal in common. It is the justification offered for all the 'excesses' perpetrated by the dictatorship and for its failure to implement its promises. Everything is postponed to a future when Russian National Socialism will 'come to flower and purge itself of its cruel, harsh features'. How indeed is such a

future to arrive? Never in history has a ruling stratum, possessed of arbitrary and absolute power, divested itself voluntarily of this power. What leads you to suppose that Hitler's government would have been exceptional? All the facts point in the other direction. National Socialism in Germany was part of the world tendency of capitalism and could never have 'come to flower', no more than Stalinism will. In fact, Stalin is to-day fulfilling Hitler's former role of policeman for the dominant sectors of world capitalism and if there is a risk attached to this, in that Stalin is like Hitler undoubtedly making his independent bid for world domination, it is a risk that has to be taken by the dominant economic powers. Those who rule us are not the masters of the economic process. It is the essence of capitalism (qualifying labels are no refutation of this) that it is an economic system outside the *conscious and rational control* of those in power. Had Hitler (or Stalin) overcome capitalism and 'subordinated it to the needs of the community', Goebbels would not have been compelled to note (*The Goebbels Diaries*, 29.9.43) that 'we shall actually see the entire German civilian production come to a standstill in a few months'. (The processes of militarization have not advanced as far as that in Britain or America but there is no doubt that they are tending in that direction.) Surely if capitalism had been 'subordinated' (i.e. replaced by a superior social system in which the economic processes would be under the control of the public) in Germany, the trend would have been in the reverse direction. For whatever reason, it was not. That alone is the significant fact. The processes of increasing State capitalism are justified by the governments in every country on the grounds of immediate expediency (opportunism) — in the remote future somehow, it is assumed, the cancellation of human rights and the failure to satisfy human wants will be rewarded by paradise. Unfortunately, the very cancellation makes it extremely unlikely that the good future will arrive. That road leads only to chaos as it did in Germany and is doing in Russia. The 'ideal National Socialism' you admire so much never existed in fact and never could have existed. A rational society cannot be built up on contradictory premises.

Nor is your argument happier when you refer to the 'herds of the foolish and ignorant'. It would be most difficult to find a more 'foolish and ignorant' herd than, to confine ourselves to this one example, the National Socialist hierarchy as described by Goebbels himself, a member of that herd. But that is beside the point. He who talks of the 'foolish and ignorant' has to justify his high claims and maintain his high standard. Intelligence and information carry their own consequences for they imply the responsibility in public matters which cannot, by definition, be demanded of 'herds of the foolish and ignorant'. It is the responsibility of those who claim to be enlightened to help raise the level of understanding of their fellows in order to equip them to govern themselves better and not the reverse. But here again you contradict yourself. You suggest arbitrary powers for a minority group of rulers (it is only a minority group which needs arbitrary powers) and at the same time call for guarantees that there will be equality of opportunity. It is certain that guarantees from a ruling minority can offer no security at all — a guarantee surely implies that those to be guaranteed have the power of enforcement. Indeed, being concerned as you are about the abuses committed by minorities against the majority, it is

impossible to understand how you can propose as a remedy — minority rule! The only deduction to be made is that you have no objection to minorities 'imposing their fads on majorities', providing that you personally approve of the fad in question. (What a mild term to use for the brutish practices of minority rule!) If that is so, you betray your lack of confidence in your own views, your lack of any hope of being able to convince a majority of the public of the validity of your politics and at the same time you seek to reduce public affairs to a squabble between contending faddists.

Your last paragraph exhibits as much confusion as anything else in your letter. Your reference to 'the German mind and outlook' might have been quoted from the speeches for the prosecution at the Nuremberg Trials or from those of the military occupation authorities engaged in demolishing the German people on the pretext of 'the collective guilt of nations'. And although 'American dollar imperialism' and Russian 'Bolshevism'(!), those two stages in capitalist decline to barbarism, are certainly 'unpalatable' why label them 'un-European'? Your resort to such categories of analysis which bring human beings down to the level of ants makes it absolutely clear that you are smearing yourself like all the dictators with race theories of history.

T. DAY.

PASTOR KNEES IN JAIL AGAIN

The Pastor was re-arrested in Germany by British Military Authority on November 1st, 1949, and is serving a prison sentence of three years. We very much regret that for reasons of space we cannot report on the conditions of his arrest and comment on the grave political issues involved, but agitation for his release is now even more urgent than it was before. In our next number we will publish a detailed report of the case and also of the campaign we intend initiating on his behalf. In the meantime would all sympathetic readers please communicate with us.

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